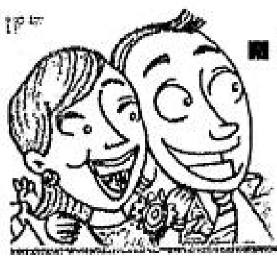

■ LIFESTYLE/D1

Prom dos and don'ts

■ WORLD/A10

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■ BUSINESS/B1

Coco-based exports jumped 14.6% in 2005

■ WORLD/A10

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Wednesday, February 15, 2006 ★★ ions / Vol. 21 / No. 69 P18 website: www.inq7.net

GI in hot water for shooting stray animals at Sulu camp

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PERHAPS THIS AMERICAN SOLDIER LIKES LIVE subjects for target practice.

Lt. Mike Rice, a member of the US Navy Seal Team 1 taking part in the RP-US Balikatan military exercises in Sulu, has gotten into the habit of

GI IN HOT / A20

SC okays filing of charges against Marcopper officials

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT HAS GIVEN THE GREEN light for the indictment of officials of Marcopper Mining Corp. for allegedly causing environmental damage in Marinduque a decade ago.

In a 17-page decision released yesterday, the high court turned down the petition by Marcopper officers John Eric Loney, Steven Paul Reid and Pedro Hernandez seeking to quash the com-

SC OKAYS/ A8

ROSES FROM SPECIAL KIDS President Macapagal-Arroyo gets red roses from hearing-impaired students of the Philippine Institute for the Deaf in Pasay City. The President visited the school on Valentine's Day.

EDWIN BACASMAS

FROM THE INSIDE looking out. Peering through the gate of his Tanay resthouse, former President Joseph Estrada watches actress Susan Roces and former Vice President Teofisto Guingona plant seedlings to launch his Freedom from Hunger movement.

Gov't raises La Niña alert

All agencies ordered to prepare for heavy rains during summer

By Blanche S. Rivera

LA NIÑA, A WEATHER phenomenon characterized by heavy rains, is coming.

Malacañang has ordered all government agencies to prepare for the onslaught of heavy rains during the summer months as the weather bureau noted consistent indications of a La Niña in the country.

President Macapagal-Arroyo met with Cabinet officials in Malacañang on Saturday for a briefing with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on recent weather disturbances that killed 14 people and displaced at least 5,700 families.

Increases in the incidence of typhoons, floods and frequent heavy rains since November last year may be explained by the development of La Niña, Pagasa said.

"The persistence of present oceanic and atmospheric patterns in the next two months will confirm the occurrence of a La Niña episode and continue to influence the climate of the Philippines," Pagasa chief Graciano Yumul said at a press briefing yesterday.

"Conditions in the country will be characterized by normal to above normal rainfall at least up to May, the probability of more tropical cyclones within the PAR (Philippine Area of Responsibility) and flooding in some areas," he said.

GOV'T RAISES/ A20

MORE THAN 4,000 people head for safety after nonstop rains spawned floods and mudslides on Panaon Island, Leyte. With total damage to crops and property that could reach P100 million, the government has placed the province under a state of calamity. *(See story on Page A18.)* JANI ARNAIZ

Ombudsman faces contempt over ₱1.3-B Comelec mess

By Armand N. Nocum, Jerome Aning and Philip C. Tubeza

NEWLY APPOINTED OMBUDSman Merceditas Gutierrez faces contempt charges for the failure of her office to determine the criminal liability of Benjamin Abalos, chair of the Commission on Elections, and other poll officials linked to irregularities in the P1.3-billion automated counting machine deal.

The Supreme Court yesterday ordered the Ombudsman to explain why it should not be held in contempt of court for not complying with its directive to determine the criminal liability of officials involved in the voided contract between the Comelec and Mega-Pacific Corp.

The court was referring to its

OMBUDSMAN/ A8

GMA hits 'Wowowee' organizers; ABS-CBN miffed

By Christine O. Avendaño and Leila B. Salaverria

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo yesterday took to task the "organization" behind the daily game show that triggered the Feb. 4 stampede, but did not name ABS-CBN.

Speaking for the first time about the stampede outside the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City, the President said the "tragedy" showed "the inadequacy and negligence of the organization that sponsored" the game show "Wowowee."

"At nakakalungkot na sa halip na tukuyin ang kalinga sa mga biktima at akuin ang responsibilidad, iyong mga sponsor ng palabas ay hinahanap na pagbintangan iyong mga biktima dahil mahirap sila (And the sad thing is, instead of focusing on providing care for the victims and claiming responsibility, the show's sponsors are trying to pin the blame on the victims because they are poor)," she said in an interview over dzRH radio.

In a statement issued later in the day, ABS-CBN said: "We are saddened that President Arroyo

GMA HITS/ A6

OFW blew lid off secret 'shabu' flea market

By Ramon Tulfo

IF THE PEOPLE AT THE MAPAYAPA compound hadn't beaten up one of their customers, the "shabu flea market" in the heart of Pasig City might still be doing brisk business today.

The customer was an overseas Filipino worker on a long vacation from the Middle East.

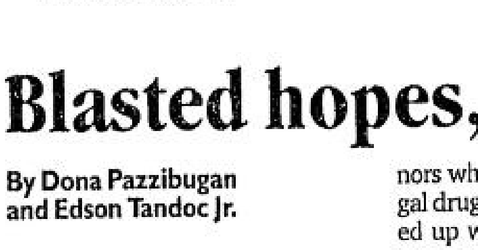
Few people know that in the planning of Friday's police raid on the drugs enclave, a suggestion came up that heliborne troops be dropped onto the compound for the assault, but this was rejected because such a strike could provoke bloody fighting, according to information obtained by the INQUIRER.

Every day, hundreds of "scorers" or "shabu" users entered the place, which operated 24 hours. It was a compound that never slept.

The mauling incident was reported by the OFW to a media colleague, Erwin Tulfo, my brother. At the time, Erwin was still hosting for ABS-CBN the "Mission X" program dealing with exposés on the ugly side of life. The show has since moved to another channel.

By the OFW's account, he had

OFW/ A20



NAGKA-BISTUHAN!

'Love' fills the halls of Congress

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

LOVE, ACTUALLY, FILLED THE HALLS OF Congress on Valentine's Day.

Some lawmakers yesterday spread their heart-filled messages by text, while others gave out cookies and chocolates.

When Deputy Speaker Emilio Espinosa Jr. ordered a roll call, only 110 House members (out of 236) responded. It would seem that

LOVE/ A6

Blasted hopes, broken dreams for 14 minors

By Dona Pazzibugan and Edson Tandoc Jr.

ONE IS A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO is eight months pregnant. Another is aged 14 with a 4-month-old fetus growing inside her.

Both have tested positive for drugs and they were among 14 minors who will be charged with illegal drug use after they were rounded up with 300 other people during a police raid on a compound of "shabu restaurants" in Pasig City, officials said yesterday.

Theirs are the tales of blasted hopes and broken dreams, social workers said.

"They knew that using drugs is wrong. But something inside them had also gone wrong," city social welfare head Francisca Delleva told the INQUIRER.

Delleva said most of the children who tested positive for drugs came from broken families.

Officials said the 14 minors, aged 14 to 17, would be charged along with around 200 adults who were arrested in Friday's raid which showed how widespread the menace of a P214-billion illegal drugs industry had become.

"Charges will be filed against

BLASTED/ A20

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/02/15/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Senate told: Cha-cha or bust

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA YESTERDAY WARNED SENators opposed to Charter change that they risked becoming "irrelevant" if they failed to support the shift to a parliamentary system.

"We don't wish to say that they will become irrelevant but that's what's going to happen," the Speaker said in a press briefing.

"It's our hope that statesmanship will prevail in the Senate ... and will respond to the call of our people to effect changes in the Constitution to save our country from this impossible system of constant chaos, paralysis and gridlock...," said De Venecia.

"The House has decided to push through with Charter change, even without the participation of the Senate.

De Venecia said the initiative to gather 195 signatures of "all members of Congress," voting jointly, to constitute the Senate and the House into a constituent assembly to authorize Charter change could be finished in 30 days.

He said the constitutional provision authorizing the revision of the Constitution by a three-fourths vote of all members of Congress was "very clear, there's no room for ambiguity."

The Senate insists that only a majority of both chambers, voting separately, could convert Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the Charter.

The Senate also wants the amendments to be done by way of a constitutional convention, which De Venecia thinks would be too long and too expensive.

"We're not trying to abolish the Senate here. Both will be replaced ... by a unicameral parliament," De Venecia said.

He expects a challenge to be brought before the Supreme Court but said he believes "in the judicial statesmanship of the Supreme Court" to stand by the House interpretation.

He said a "two-track initiative" for Charter change would be set into motion in the "next 48 hours," starting with the signature campaign in the House and a people's initiative to be launched by 100 people's and nongovernment organizations at the Ninoy Aquino stadium today.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula said the House committee on constitutional amendments, which he chairs, has already completed the debates on specific amendments.

Once the 195 signatures are gathered, the new Charter will be presented for adoption by the plenary and a joint session could be convened by March 15.

Senators, including allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo, scoffed at the 30-day ultimatum.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the Senate would not be rushed into completing its hearings on what mode to adopt.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said what De Venecia was doing was unconstitutional which he would have to answer for before the SC.

"We reject this brazen attempt to ram Cha-cha down our throats. I predict that this ultimatum will convince a total of zero senators," said Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

"No need to wait for 30 days. He can have my answer now. No to concentration of power. No to *kami-kami, tayo-tayo* [cronyist] politics. No to Cha-cha," said Sen. Manuel Roxas.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the House has to to set its priorities right by transmitting the 2006 budget measure to the Senate before tackling Charter change.

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AFP warns would-be rebs as Magdalo boys go to court

By Tarra V. Quismundo
and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE MILITARY WARNED YESTERDAY IT would court-martial soldiers who heed escaped mutineers' call for them to wear red armbands as a sign of protest, and fielded up to 400 troops to prevent any more escapes as 21 detained Oakwood mutineers appeared before a Makati court trying them on coup d'etat charges.

Armed Forces spokesman Col. Tristan Kison issued the warning even as the military top brass has insisted that the troops were olidly behind their embattled commander-n-chief.

Apart from not being part of a soldier's iniform, wearing red arm bands even vhen they're in civilian clothes would onstitute "violation of good order and nilitary discipline because it's a sign of lefiance," Col. Tristan Kison told reorters.

The so-called "Magdalo" group which taged the July 27, 2003 mutiny at the Oakvood Premier hotel in Makati has been vocal ately about their goal to oust President Macaagal-Arroyo.

Four Magdalo officers who escaped from n Army detention facility last Jan. 17 issued statement on Monday urging the public to lramatize their protest against what they alled the "bogus" Arroyo administration by vearing red arm bands.

Meanwhile, in spite of the unusually heavy ecurity thrown around them, one of the 23 ccused soldiers who appeared in court yeserday managed to speak with reporters for ome five minutes before he was called away y a court employee to sign an attendance heet.

"Our group is calling on the people to hoose, decide, whether we would stay under his system run through corruption and deeption, or will we take the stand for truth and change?" said 1st Lt. Francisco Ashley Acedillo.

About 30 uniformed Military Police troopers were inside the court room guarding the 21 accused officers. In addition, about six military agents in civilian clothes guarded Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, who had escaped last Dec. 14 but was recaptured on Jan. 27. Also in court apart from the 21 were two other officers earlier released on bail.

Army Capt. Ramon Zagala II, spokesman for the military's National Capital Region Command said roughly 400 soldiers provided security for yesterday's hearing at Branch 148 of the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Taking their posts as early as sunrise, soldiers were detailed to guard the route of the convoy of roughly 30 military vehicles that escorted the accused to court, the perimeter and surrounding intersections of the old Makati City Hall building, as well as hallway and interior of the Session Hall.

"It's like there's a war here," said lead defense counsel Roel Pulido. "I think this is an indication of how insecure they really are. Two weeks ago they were saying four escapees cannot launch anything, but now they're saying 25 detainees are a threat to national security."

Acedillo appeared undaunted, however, as he approached the reporters. No one made an effort to stop him either.

"Obviously, our detention does not limit our goal," he said. "Physically, you are limited, but that is not the end of one man's aspirations. His thought and awareness extends and expands beyond the jail cell."

Just before the hearing started, he slipped reporters a note in the name of three Magdalo leaders who decided not to attend the hearing – Navy Lieutenants Antonio Trillanes IV and James Layug, and Marine Capt. Gary Alejano. It was the same statement Trillanes issued after a hearing on Jan. 17.

After Judge Oscar Pimentel adjourned the hearing, one of the soldiers handed reporters a white handkerchief bearing the Magdalo insignia printed in red. Written under the insignia in bold black letters were the words: "Sulong Bayan! Ituloy ang Laban (Advance People! Continue the Struggle!)."

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Sotto urges seizure of 'shabu tiangge' property for drug rehab center

THE PASIG PROPERTY USED AS a "shabu tiangge" should be seized and converted into a detention and drug rehabilitation center.

Former Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III hurled this challenge at the Department of Justice, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the Philippine National Police to deliver a clear and strong message that the government will not tolerate the use of property for the use and trade of illegal drugs.

This, Soto said, fulfills the requirement that one of the pillars in drug abuse prevention is rehabilitation. In addition, seizure of the property would be poetic justice and a slap on the face of the drug-traffickers in the area.

The former senator, in a press statement, cited R.A. 9165, the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, which stipulates that the property used as a den or resort for illegal drug use may be seized and confiscated in favor of the government.

The Pasig police chief and six members of the PDEA were relieved in the wake of last week's raid on what was described as a "one-stop shabu restaurant" in Pasig.

GMA: Face of Edsa has changed

A WEEK BEFORE THE nation commemorates the 20th year anniversary of the first people power uprising, President Macapagal-Arroyo said "the face of Edsa has changed as far as leaders are concerned." She plans to celebrate it quietly.

But President Arroyo said she did not want to add anything more on what she noted was "this controversy."

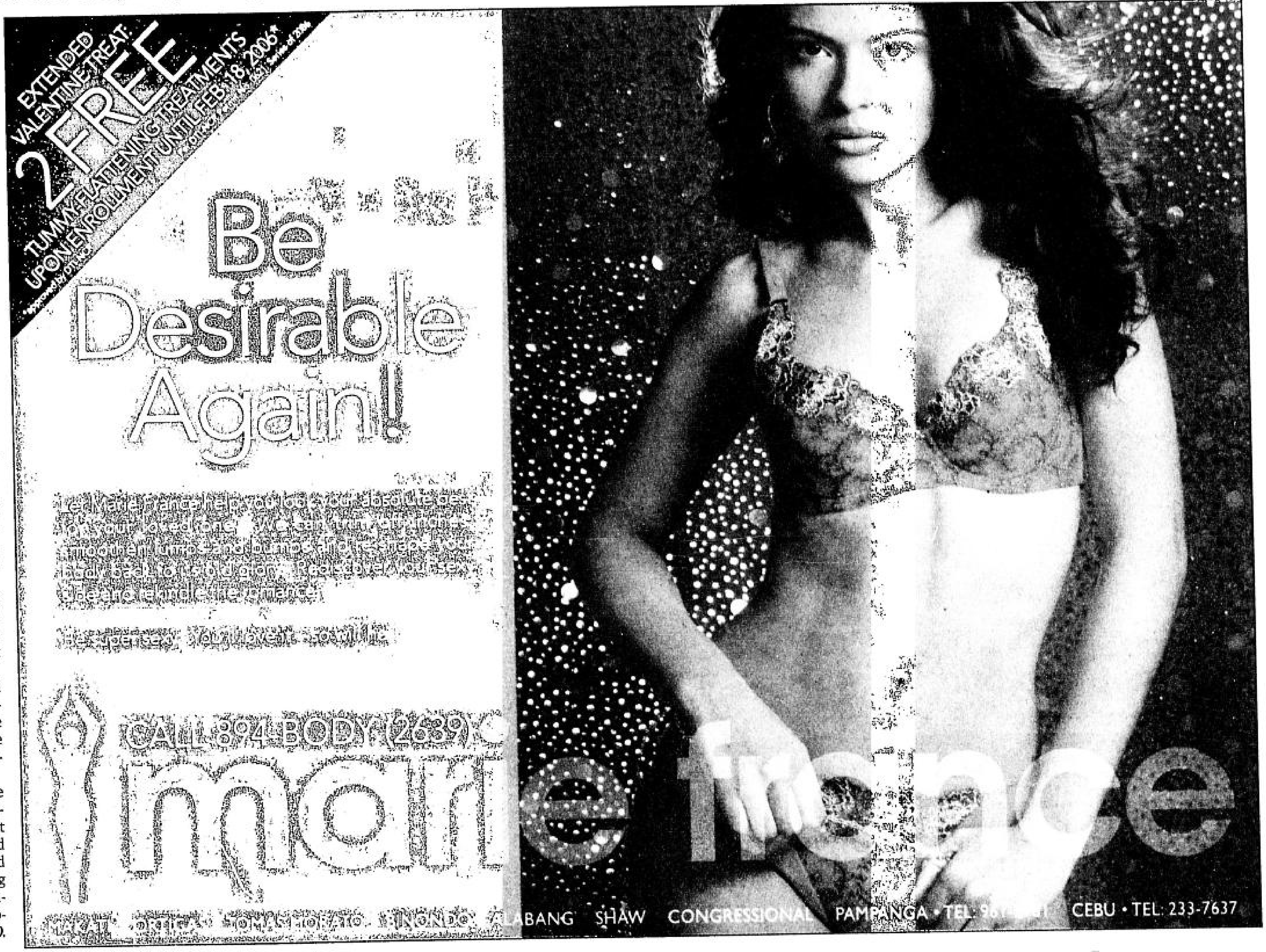
"Because the people are tired of politics," Ms Arroyo explained, in an interview over dzRH radio.

The President said that it was better to celebrate the Feb. 22-25 people power uprising with a simple ceremony.

"And each of us can celebrate individually and with meaning," President Arroyo said.

"As for me, I will bring the government to the people on this day as I have been doing everyday," she also said.

At the height of the political crisis that President Arroyo faced last year, various sectors and the Palace have claimed that people were losing faith in launching another people power uprising. *Christine O. Avendaño*



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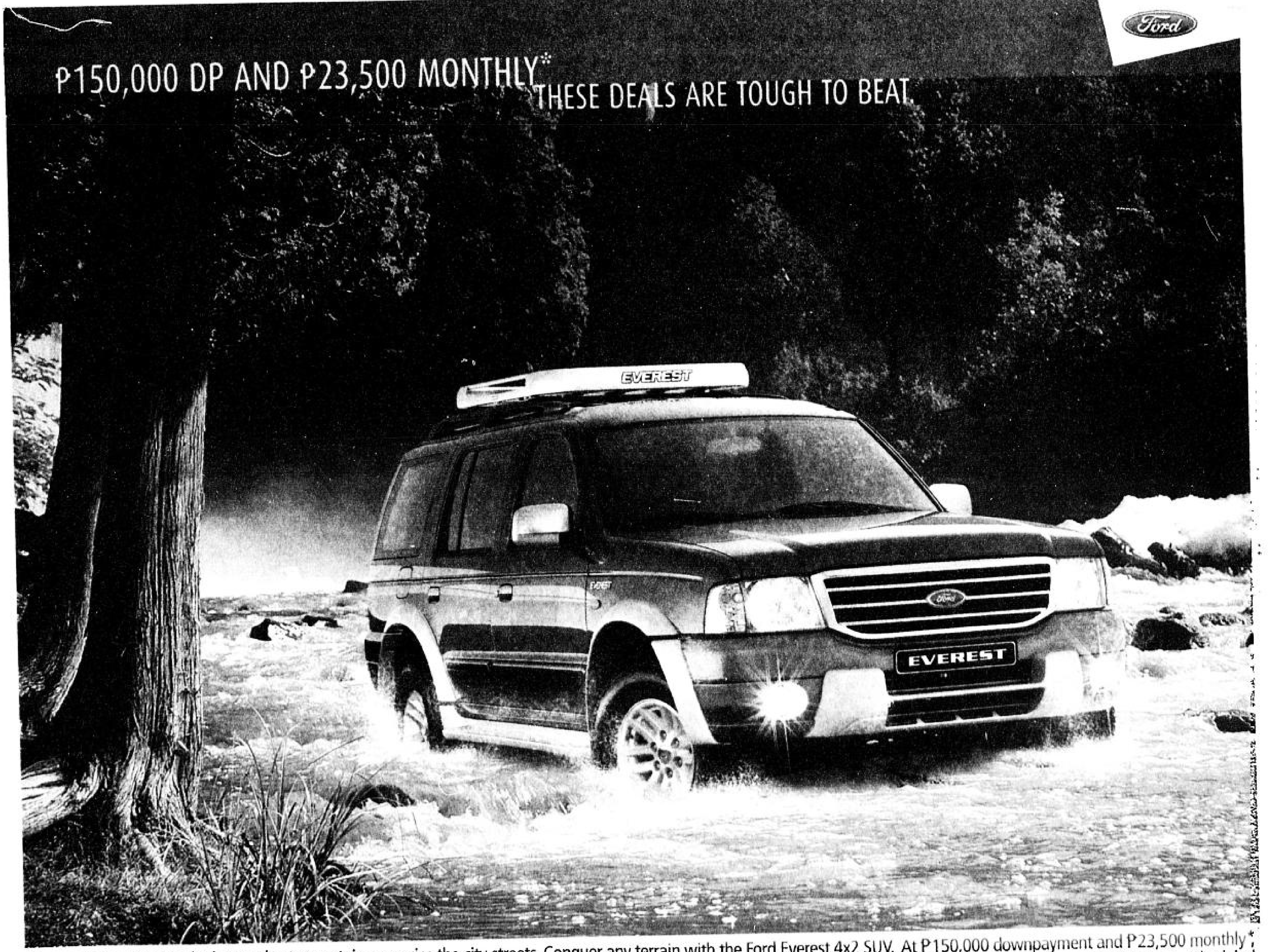

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Tax evaders blamed for huge debt burden

By Norman Bordador

REP. ROLANDO ANDAYA JR., OUTGOING chair of the House of Representatives' committee on appropriations, called on Filipinos Monday night to stop cheating on their taxes, saying it was to blame for the country's heavy debt burden which would eat up nearly one-third this year's proposed national budget of P1.05 trillion.

Andaya made the statement as he formally presented to the entire House membership the long-delayed proposed national budget for 2006. His sponsorship speech was also his valedictory address to Congress as he prepared to assume his new position in President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet as budget secretary.

Collective penance

"This budget groans under the weight of loan repayments, our collective penance for engaging in the national sport that is tax evasion," Andaya said.

Militant and cause-oriented groups have repeatedly blamed the massive debt-servicing outlays for the dwindling funds left for education, health and other services. Party-list groups in the House have even filed a bill calling for a halt to repayment of loans to build the $2.1-billion Bataan Nuclear Power Plant mothballed nearly 20 years ago.

"Debt service is the elephant in the living room, one cannot deny its existence or shove it under the rug." the representative from Camarines Sur said.

"We can either pay it down now or bequeath it all later to our children," he added. "We shouldn't allow them to visit our graves and rant: All you have left us are IOU's."

"What we can do is to stop the debt pile and let revenues, not loans, pick the tab for government spending. We have maxed out (overextended) our national credit card," Andaya said. "If we want our credit repayments to go down, we must first stop our addiction to debt and start our reliance on taxes."

National debt

The Philippines' national debt stood at P3.91 trillion as of November 2005.

The proposed P1.053-trillion 2006 budget is 14.7 percent or P134.6-billion higher than the 2005 budget of P918.6-billion.

In terms of expense class, P330.5 billion or 31.4 percent goes to personal services and P616.7 billion or 58.6 percent goes to maintenance and other operating expenses, leaving only P106 billion or 10 percent for capital expenditures.

Of the entire allotment for maintenance and operating expenses, P340-billion, which represents 32.3 percent of the total budget, will go to debt servicing, while P166.5-billion or 15.8 of the budget, will go to local government units.

In line with Constitutional provisions, the Department of Education is to get the single largest allocation with P119.1 billion. Other allocations include: Department of Public Works and Highways (P62.3-billion); National Defense (P51.6-billion); Interior and Local Governments (45.6-billion); Agriculture (15.6-billion); Agrarian Reform (P15-billion); Transportation and Communication (P14.3-billion); Health (P10.6-billion); Judiciary (P8.5-billion); and Finance (P6.9-billion)

Andaya is to be replaced as head of the House appropriations committee by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda.

"I hope that you will treat me kindly in my new work, but friendships, I understand, should not come in the way of your duty to check and balance the department I will lead," Andaya said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia lauded Andaya's "energy, creativity and competence" as chair of the appropriations panel. "Andaya is surely a great loss to the House but a big gain for the nation."

Solons expect Moody's to change mood on RP

By Michael Lim Ubac

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS yesterday said they expected Moody's Investors Service to revise upwards its outlook on the Philippines, following Fitch Ratings' and Standard & Poor's "stable" assessment of the country's economic prospects.

Rep. Jesli Lapus, chair of the House ways and means committee, said the positive rating from Fitch and S&P was something the government had hoped for for a long time.

"In fact this is a delayed reaction by theoretical ratings agencies. They cannot ignore the real score in the market place. Even the country's corporate and banking bond flotations never had it so hot," he said.

Lapus predicted that Moody's, which last week decided to retain its "negative" outlook on the Philippines despite recent economic reforms, would also reverse its view.

"We will surely get a positive rating from Moody's once we prove our efficiency in implementing the reformed VAT and other reform measures," said Lapus whose committee steered the passage of the expanded value-added tax measure.

Rep. Exequiel Javier, the committee vice chair, said an upgrade from two out of three international credit-rating agencies was proof that the country was "fast regaining the respect of the international community."

"This is a recognition of government's seriousness and decisiveness in pursuing needed reforms to correct structural defects in the tax system, generate more revenues through tax measures and generate earnings or savings from administrative measures," said Javier.

At the House meanwhile, the father of Finance Secretary Margarito Teves late Monday abandoned his bid for the chairmanship of the ways and means committee, forestalling what would have been a father-son monopoly of the country's taxation and finance powers.

In a privilege speech, Rep. Herminio Teves, a ruling Lakas party representative from Negros Oriental, said he was conceding the chairmanship to Lapus, the current committee chair, despite a midterm-sharing agreement forged in 2004.

But the older Teves wanted it put on record that he did not agree with the reasoning of the House leaders in denying him the committee post, that is, that a father-son, legislative-executive monopoly of taxation and finance powers would not be in the country's interest.

Court extends Nur's leave

A MAKATI COURT YESTERDAY agreed to extend the medical furlough of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari and his fellow accused, who are both confined at the St. Luke's Medical Center.

Judge Sixto Marella Jr. granted Misuari and his spiritual adviser Ustadz Abuharis Usman an 8-day extension of their temporary freedom, which would have ended yesterday.

"The court finds the urgent motion to be with merit considering the age of both accused, the nature of their illness, and proof submitted in support thereof," said Marella in an order released yesterday morning.

Misuari, 65, a former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and Usman, 68, have been detained for the past four years in a special Philippine National Police detention facility in Fort Sto. Domingo, Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

They were charged with rebellion for their role in the bloody uprising that killed some 100 people in Jolo in 2001.

Misuari and Usman were released under tight guard on Jan. 28 so they could undergo a thorough medical examination at St. Luke's in Quezon City.

Lawyer Arthur Lim cited in his petition for an extension that tests revealed medical conditions that needed immediate treatment.

Usman, he said, was diagnosed with "symptomatic gallstone disease," an ailment that needed surgery, according to a medical certificate from St. Luke's. The operation meant that he would need to be confined until Feb. 22.

Misuari proved to have erratic blood pressure readings. His medical certificate recommended "monitoring of blood pressure with medications."

While Misuari did not need extended confinement, Lim said "it would be more practical and convenient" for the two accused to be returned to their detention facility at the same time.

Copies of Marella's order were given the Department of Interior and Local Government, PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao, and the PNP's health service office.

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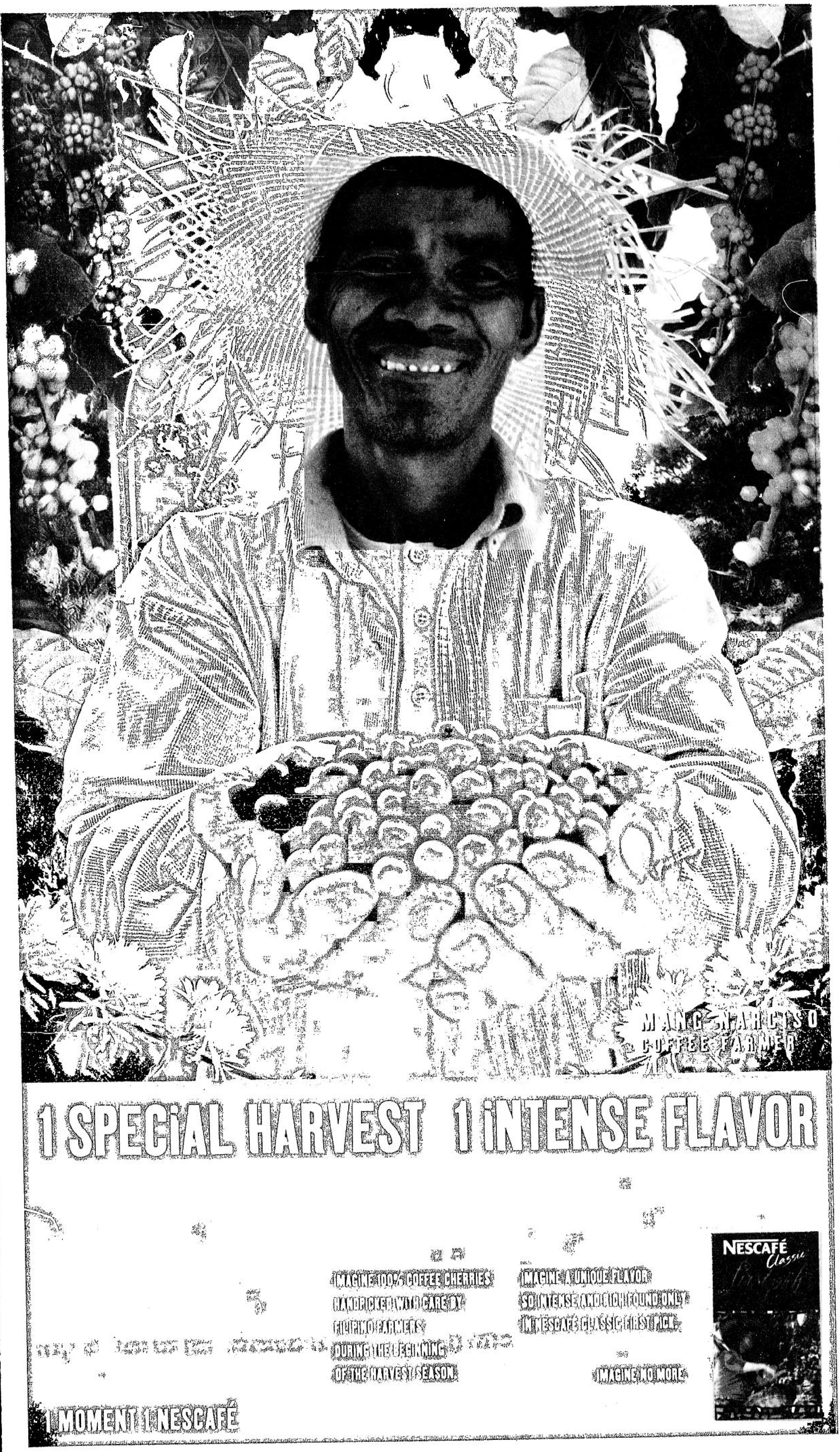
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PIBD0407A037	30-Jan-07	10.50%	7.57%
PIBD1007A025	30-Jan-07	14.125%	7.57%
PIBD0207B917	10-Feb-07	8.875%	7.59%
PIBD0707B217	24-Feb-07	14.25%	7.61%
PIBD0507B435	28-Feb-07	13.00%	7.62%
PIBD0307C099	11-Mar-07	11.00%	7.64%
PIBD0707C225	23-Mar-07	14.00%	7.66%
PIBD0507D442	11-Apr-07	13.00%	7.69%
PIBD0707D233	19-Apr-07	13.375%	7.70%
PIBD0707E241	18-May-07	13.875%	7.75%
PIBD0407E042	22-May-07	10.625%	7.76%
PIBD1007E030	29-May-07	13.875%	7.77%
PIBD0707F259	15-Jun-07	13.50%	7.80%
PIID0507F013	27-Jun-07	12.375%	7.82%
PIBD0707G267	13-Jul-07	14.00%	7.84%
PIID0307G045	16-Jul-07	11.00%	7.85%
PIBD0507G458	25-Jul-07	10.75%	7.86%
PIBD0707H275	3-Aug-07	14.25%	7.88%
PIBD0407H058	14-Aug-07	10.00%	7.90%
PID0707HA286	24-Aug-07	14.25%	7.91%
PIBD0707I292	21-Sep-07	14.50%	7.97%
PIBD0507J464	24-Oct-07	11.00%	8.03%
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From page A1

has prejudged the results of the government investigation into the Ultra stampede.

"[ABS-CBN chair and CEO] Gabby Lopez has already claimed moral responsibility, and ABS-CBN moved immediately to address the needs of the victims and their families. We continue to do so, focusing now on medium- and long-term assistance."

Ms Arroyo made the statement when asked to comment on the attempt of some sectors to put political color to the issue.

More than 70 were killed and hundreds more were injured when mostly unemployed people—many of whom had queued for days—scrambled to gain entry into the PhilSports Arena for the first anniversary show of "Wowowee."

Critics of the administration immediately blamed the government for the tragedy, saying it had failed to alleviate the plight of the poor. They cited the estimated 30,000 who endured the long queue in the hope of winning cash and other prizes.

But Malacañang officials protested what they said were attempts to use the issue of poverty against the President.

Government's role

Ms Arroyo told dzRH that the role of the government was to determine the circumstances behind the stampede and to bring justice to the victims and their families.

She said the investigation would be fair: "We should show that no one is above the law and that equal rights and equal justice will prevail over wealth or status.

"Whoever is found liable in the investigation should be held responsible."

The Department of Justice is currently investigating the stampede.

The Senate committee on justice and human rights has called for comments "under oath" from persons involved.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, acting chair of the committee, yesterday said letters had been sent out in preparation for an inquiry.

He said the hearings would start "as soon as we get answers that would be useful."

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago had earlier called for an inquiry "in aid of legislation on the criminal and civil liabilities of ABS-CBN and its security officials for the quasi-offense of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide and multiple grave physical injuries."

Santiago said an investigation was in order because the penal code had to be amended to raise the penalties for reckless imprudence and negligence, "particularly on the part of entertainment firms, including TV stations, that deliberately seek to attract big crowds of people beyond their capacity to manage, thus posing danger to life and limb among the masses."

Invitations

Ferdinand Lavin, National Capital Region executive officer of the National Bureau of Investigation, said the NBI was preparing to invite "Wowowee" host Willie Revillame to make a formal statement.

"It would only be fair to invite Revillame so he can give us his side," Lavin told reporters.

He said it was possible that the NBI would also invite top ABS-CBN executives to give their own statements this week.

Lavin said the bureau was in the process of taking the statements of the heads of Pasig City government offices.

"Through [their] statements and documents ... we will determine whether they amply responded to ABS-CBN's request for assistance during the event," he said.

Lavin said the NBI had coordinated with the Office of Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio and taken the statements of sacked Pasig police chief Senior Supt. Raul Medina; Richard Cua, chair of Barangay Oranbo, where PhilSports Arena is located, and Insp. Khadaffy Bitor, officer in charge of the city's Traffic and Parking Management Division.

He said investigators were scheduled to meet with the chiefs of the Bureau of Fire Protection and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority units that responded to calls for assistance.

"So far, we have completed 60-70 percent of the investigation," Lavin said.

He said the NBI had obtained complete documentation on the deaths of 70 people, the medical certificates of the injured, and sworn statements from 30 vital witnesses.

Continuing aid

At the Bulong Pulungan forum, Tina Monzon-Palma, program director of ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata, said the network would not stop the aid it had been giving the stampede victims even if they decide to go to court.

She said, however, that the network could not do anything should the victims refuse help.

"I doubt it. I don't think [so]. All of these are most likely people who would file [a case], but we opted to assist them. But should they refuse [the aid], that's a different story," Palma said when asked if the network would cease helping the victims once a case had been filed.

The nongovernment anticrime group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption had earlier offered to assist those who wished to file a class suit against the network.

Palma said that as of yesterday, nobody had approached ABS-CBN to seek a settlement in exchange for not filing a suit.

But she also said a class suit would help the victims: "It would be to the best interest of all of them. If they can hire individual lawyers, they will. But if they are not that well-off, they can go together to [VACC chair] Dante Jimenez and give all of their *salaysay* (statements) so we can deal with it."

By ABS-CBN's count, 71 people were killed and over 600 injured in the stampede.

71 Dreams Foundation

Fr. Carmelo Caluag, a member of the ABS-CBN board of directors, said at the same forum that the network had spent some P4 million in aid to the victims.

"It came out in the news. Their running tally is P4 million," he said when asked how much the network had spent so far to help the victims.

Caluag reiterated that the network was planning to set up a foundation to provide long-term aid not just to the families of those who died in the stampede but also to other less fortunate people.

He said the project, called the 71 Dreams Foundation, would provide material aid to and continually support and monitor the beneficiaries.

The program will also provide livelihood and education support, Caluag said, adding:

"It's not just a doleout. It's the classic distinction between giving them fish and teaching them to fish."

Palma said ABS-CBN had been segregating its show audiences, with the elderly and children assigned a separate line. She said network executives were also studying new ways to distribute tickets to its shows.

Earlier, Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, head of the fact-finding body assigned to look into the stampede, said the people who had queued for the "Wowowee" anniversary show were "treated like animals." *With reports from Margaux C. Ortiz and Philip C. Tubeza*

'Love' fills the halls of Congress

From page A1

most of the country's representatives were busy with their constituents or V-Day gimmicks.

At 4:34 p.m., Espinosa declared a lack of quorum.

But as early as 9 a.m., lawmakers were sending jokes and Valentine text messages to one another, some of which were forwarded to reporters covering the House.

It was Marinduque Rep. Edmund Reyes who fired the first of the love texts: "To a man who inspired virgins, comforted ladies, helped girls in need, shared so many beds and gave many women happy memories, Happy Valentine's Day, friend."

Aurora Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara forwarded this message: "This Valentine, may you be showered with girls, or be showered by girls, or be with girls in a shower ... *basta* (so long as there are) many girls and many showers."

Not to be outdone, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles of Davao, sent off a message greeting everyone's "*maybahay, at sa yong may*apartment, *may*condo, *may*parlor at *may*scholarship (homemaker, apartment owner, condo owner, parlor owner and those on scholarship)."

Still another text message, sent by Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, told the story of a man who married one woman "to escape many other women, and ended up chasing many other women to forget that he's married to one woman. What a romantic life! Cheers!" Lapus said.

Cookies and chocolates

Representatives Cynthia Villar of Las Piñas, Teofisto Guingona III of Bukidnon and Imee Marcos of Ilocos Sur gave away cookies and chocolates.

On Monday, Villar had sent out boxes of chocolate crinkles, while Guingona distributed Cadbury chocolates yesterday.

Marcos—famous for her heartthrob son Borgy Manotoc—handed out cookies filled with white chocolates. They came in red heart-shaped canisters.

Apparently seeing red in the continuing human rights' violations in the country, Bayan Muna party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador distributed coffee mugs with the inscription "Stop killing activists and journalists."

If you love the country

Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel's message was sharper than Cupid's arrow.

She called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to treat her presidency and governance as a sort of romance with the Filipino people. "And the ultimate expression of love is letting go," Baraquel said.

"Like all affairs of the heart, when promises are broken, when love is lost or there's none in the first place, the relationship has to end," she said.

"The painful truth the President has to admit to herself is that the affair that never was is already over," she added, referring to the Arroyo administration, whose legitimacy has been questioned because of allegations of electoral fraud.

Resign

Baraquel is a member of the House minority and a staunch supporter of the campaign to get Ms Arroyo to resign since the "Hello Garci" tapes cast doubts on the legitimacy of her presidency.

"She is so obsessed (with) power and wealth that she has fully forgotten that the romance called governance is a partnership and a contract with the people," she said.

The opposition congresswoman said that allegations of cheating and Ms Arroyo's evasiveness on the issue of the Garci tapes constituted abandonment of her pledge of honesty and integrity.

"How can this relationship go on if there are unsettled doubts? After R-VAT and other antipeople economic policies, EO 464 and CPR, and emaciated social services, she can't possibly expect to gain the people's trust," Baraquel said.

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NEWSBRIEFS

Erap still has clout with poor, says GMA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-ARROYO YESTERDAY grudgingly admitted that deposed President Joseph Estrada had maintained his mass appeal despite being incarcerated in a Tanay rest house for the last five years.

This strong and resilient following of Estrada prompted Ms Arroyo to rekindle efforts to reconcile with her predecessor who recently met with another faction of the opposition led by former President Corazon Aquino.

"I recognize that President Estrada still has a following and they see his current condition as a reflection of their own situation," Ms Arroyo said in a radio interview.

The President reiterated that she had always been for unity and reconciliation and that healing the wounds of Edsa was in the 10-point agenda she drew up at the start of her fresh six-year mandate in 2004.

Ms Arroyo, however, said that she would not intervene in the plunder case being faced by Estrada at the Sandiganbayan.

"As much as I am averse to other branches of government interfering in the affairs of the executive, I myself should not intervene in the judiciary on these issues," she said.

In Estrada's case, the President said: "It is important that process under the law is part of national unity and reconciliation."

Her chief of staff, Michael T. Defensor, had previously sounded out Malacañang's openness to giving Estrada temporary relief from jail through a recognizance.

Black hearts of protest

BEARING BLACK HEART-SHAPED PLACARDS, some 500 members of the militant Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) held a Valentine's Day protest at the Chino Roces (Mendiola) Bridge to press for a P3,000 across-the-board wage increase and the immediate payment of their cost of living allowances (Colas). "This government has impoverished teachers with its salary freeze policy and reduced real spending for public education by 5 percent, resulting in an alarming spike in the number of out-of-school youths," said ACT chair Antonio Tinio in a statement. Militant youth and students also held a rally at Plaza Miranda in Quiapo to celebrate Valentine's in a LovapaLOSER teach-in. *Alcuin Papa*

Cha-cha info drive set

MULTISECTORAL GROUPS ARE SET TO GATHER in Manila today to kick off the nationwide Charter change information campaign. Dubbed "Sigaw ng Bayan," the pro-amendment gathering will be held at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium from 8 a.m. to noon. Spearheaded by the Kilusan ng Mamamayan para sa Matatag na Republika (KMMR) – the umbrella of more than 50 urban poor, farmer and fisher folk, student, youth leader and worker groups – "Sigaw" aims to articulate and educate the electorate on how best to tackle the issues affecting the 1987 Constitution. *Tina G. Santos*

No funds to fight smuggling

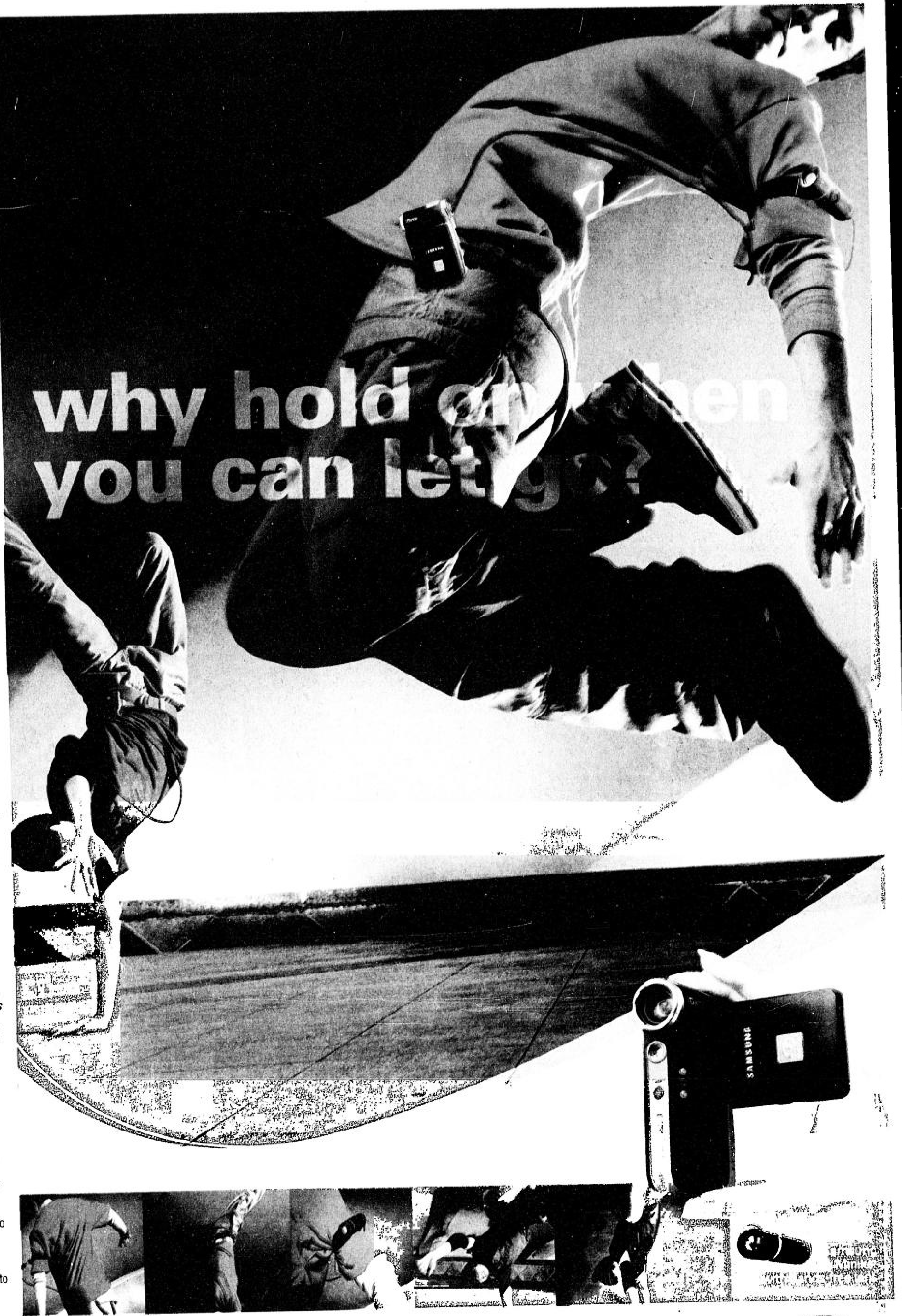
THE LACK OF FUNDS TO BUILD AN AIRTIGHT case against big-time smugglers remained the biggest stumbling block to the government's antismuggling drive, according to Customs Deputy Commissioner Celso Templo. The Bureau of Customs did not even have an intelligence fund under its 2005 budget, except for P1 million allocated for the maintenance of its computers, he said. "Initially, the bureau needs [some money] to conduct a full-blown investigation and purchase vehicles and communications equipment," Templo said. "We have started the probe; we are gathering evidence and coordinating with other agencies." He called on Congress to provide the funds to provide the government with ammunition to go after smugglers.

Pinoys insist on 'palusot'

THE FILIPINOS' PENCHANT FOR *PALUSOT* (TRYing to get away with things) was the reason many of them continued to bring amulets made of bullets on their flights despite repeated warnings by airport authorities, Supt. Rizalino Roxas, Airport Security Center operations chief of the Manila International Airport Authority said yesterday. Between Feb. 4 and 7 alone, a Miaa statement said, 11 passengers were found carrying a total of 14 bullets. "The passengers, mostly OFWs, said the bullets were amulets they believed could bring them luck and protect them from evil spirits," the statement said. The passengers were held for questioning but were allowed to board their flights. *Nikko Dizon*

Airline raps new security

CATHAY PACIFIC AIRWAYS, THE LARGEST FOREIGN carrier operating at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), complained yesterday about the new setup at the final security check at the airport, making it the first airline to openly criticize the innovation. "This new setup has been affecting all airlines' operational requirements," Eddie Monreal, Cathay Pacific station manager, told reporters. Tall wooden partitions have been placed at the two departure concourses of Naia Terminal 1 to segregate "sanitized" from "unsanitized" items and persons – those that had undergone security checks from those that had not. Monreal said the setup contributed to the delay of two Cathay Pacific flights yesterday by as much as 45 minutes. On Monday, one of its flights, as well as two of Northwest Airlines, were nearly delayed because of it. *Nikko Dizon*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Ombudsman faces contempt...

From page A1

ruling of Jan. 13, 2004, that voided MegaPacific's contract to supply the Comelec with 1,991 automated counting machines because the deal was tainted with "graft and legal infirmities."

In the decision penned by then Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban, the Ombudsman was asked to identify the Comelec officials who may be held criminally liable for the awarding of the contract to the two firms in the MegaPacific consortium.

The Office of the Solicitor General was also asked to take measures to recover the P800 million initially paid to MegaPacific for the counting machines.

The high court's order to Gutierrez came a day after Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo, a former Comelec chair, told senators that he was in possession of documents showing that the MegaPacific contract was overpriced by as much as P500 million.

Benipayo said the Comelec had already paid MegaPacific P1.3 billion.

Mental dishonesty

Reacting to the allegation of an overprice, Abalos threatened to sue Benipayo for libel.

Abalos accused Benipayo, his predecessor as Comelec chief, of "mental dishonesty," saying that overpricing was impossible because the agency, as part of bidding procedures, pre-determined the cost of the counting machines at P1.3 billion.

The amount was set when Benipayo was still head of the Comelec, Abalos told reporters at a press conference.

Abalos said the estimate was reached after the Comelec consulted groups like the election watchdog National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections.

"If you bid out a project, you can't go beyond the agency's estimate. We were actually able to get the ACMs at a price much lower than the estimate. So where's the overpricing in that?" he said.

ABALOS

BENIPAYO

Abalos recalled that after he took over as chair, the Comelec was able to secure a deal with MegaPacific for 1,600 ACMs for P1.2 billion.

Abalos was appointed chair of the Comelec on June 5, 2002. The poll body awarded the contract to MegaPacific on April 13, 2003.

Korean firm

MegaPacific may have paid only P500 million to the Korean firm that manufactured the counting machines but the remaining amount could have been used by the consortium for other components of the deal, according to Abalos.

"The deal included hardware, software, security and logistics. I don't know how the consortium actually used the money. For all you know, the software could have been more costly," he said.

He downplayed the findings of Ombudsman graft investigators that he had close ties with other MegaPacific's incorporators.

The investigators noted that Abalos and MegaPacific incorporator Pedro Tan had stood as sponsors in the wedding of a son of two other MegaPacific incorporators, spouses Enrique and Rosita Tansipek.

"With the relationship of spouses Enrique and Rosita Tansipek and Pedro Tan with Abalos, prudence dictates that Abalos inhibit himself from the whole process," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. had quoted the investigators as saying.

But Abalos said that his alleged close ties with some of the incorporators could not be used against him because he had known many Filipino-Chinese in his long career as a politician.

"I had been a judge, a mayor... With all those positions, I met a lot of people but that does not mean that they're close to me," he said.

Trip to Seoul

Pimentel had said Abalos and other Comelec commissioners also "committed an act of impropriety" when they and their wives traveled to Seoul in 2003 to visit the plant of the Korean firm.

He said he was informed that the plane tickets and hotel accommodations for the trip were bankrolled by the Korean company, contradicting Abalos' claim that the expenses for the trip were paid for out of the P1 million he won in a golf tournament in Wack Wack, Mandaluyong.

Resign

"If Chairman Abalos is telling the truth, I challenge him to produce the plane tickets, vouchers and other documents to support his claim," Pimentel said.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee, said Abalos and all the Comelec commissioners implicated in the MegaPacific deal would have to resign before the country's electoral system could be computerized.

"That is what we should work for. Not only because of what happened but because we can never have automation for as long as they are there," Arroyo said.

Abalos had insisted that nothing was illegal about the contract and that the Supreme Court ruling nullifying it did not stop the Comelec from using the automated machines to count ballots.

Arroyo said the high court had said that Abalos and his fellow commissioners should "refrain from implementing any other contract or agreement entered into with regard to the (automated election) project."

Arroyo said the Senate could not approve the Comelec request for P1 billion to computerize the country's election system until Abalos and the other commissioners resigned.

He said the present Comelec commissioners were "estopped" by the Supreme Court decision from advocating automated elections or from having anything to do with it "because of their past record."

"So, we cannot approve it because they're still there. Now, if they are not, then we can appropriate the money," Arroyo said. "How can we have a plain and honest election if they're the ones there? They can't even conduct a clean and honest bidding."

The Senate earlier adopted the report of its blue ribbon committee which said that the Comelec commissioners' illegal actions in the MegaPacific deal had put in jeopardy the holding of credible elections in the country.

The committee report said that if the election commissioners did not resign, the "most feasible way to remove them was for the Ombudsman to file criminal charges against them."

The committee said the Supreme Court, in an August 2003 resolution, rejected the notion that Comelec commissioners cannot be criminally charged before they are impeached.

SC okays filing of charges against Marcopper officials

From page A1

plaints filed against them by the Department of Justice.

They have been charged with violating the Water Code, National Pollution Control decree and reckless imprudence resulting in damage to property.

In their petition, the Marcopper executives sought the dismissal of the case for "being duplicitous" because the DOJ filed more than one charge for a single incident of polluting the Boac and Makulapnit rivers.

They also insisted that they were not yet officers of Marcopper when the alleged offenses were committed.

However, the three had told the lower court that they were willing to be arraigned on the criminal charge of reckless imprudence, which carries a minimum penalty of 21 days in jail.

The Supreme Court noted that "the prosecution charged each petitioner with four offenses, with each information charging only one offense."

"Thus, petitioners erroneously invoke duplicity of charges as a ground to quash the informations. On this score alone, the petition deserves outright denial," the court said.

In October last year, the Marinduque provincial government filed a lawsuit in Nevada accusing Canadian mining giant Placer Dome Inc. of damaging the environment and the health of people on the island.

Placer Dome operated Marcopper when a rock formation around the plug near a drainage tunnel fractured on March 24, 1996, sending millions of tons of open-pit copper mine waste down the 26-km Makulapnit and Boac rivers to the provincial capital.

The following year, Placer Dome cut ties to the Philippines after 33 years of mining on the island.

The cleanup was left to Philippine subsidiaries, according to the lawsuit filed in Nevada by Marinduque Gov. Carmencita Reyes. The complaint said that the subsidiaries did a bad job protecting residents from the ill effects of the tainted air, land and water.

Reyes said Placer Dome had disappeared and ignored pleas from the Marinduque government. She said that the spill had caused "unspeakable poverty and devastation" on the island that used to be a peaceful tropical paradise.

The lawsuit alleges that forests, river basins and coral reefs have been smothered by hundreds of thousands of pulverized mining waste rock and toxic tailings laden with arsenic, cadmium, lead, manganese, nickel and sulfate.

But a spokesperson for Placer Dome has said that the Canadian mining company had only a 40-percent interest in Marcopper and was thus spared by Philippine law from the full responsibilities of a majority shareholder. *With a report from Christine Gaylican*

THANK YOU FOR RESTORING THE PHILIPPINE PLASTICS INDUSTRY BACK TO HEALTH

President Gloria M. Arroyo
Malacañang, Manila

Your Excellency:

The Philippine Plastics Industry Association, Inc. (PPIA), representing more than 1,000 fabricators and converters of plastic resins and employing over 500,000 workers, express our whole-hearted thanks for the issuance of Executive Order No. 486. The EO corrects the tariff distortion that made our industry uncompetitive due to the higher duties on raw materials than those of competing finished plastic products. We use plastic resins and convert them into packaging, industrial and consumer products. Plastics have grown into a major industry cutting across industries like packaging; appliances; household and industrial items; personal care; automotive, construction and housing, and agriculture/ aquaculture inputs.

We are likewise grateful to DTI Secretary Peter Favila, NEDA Director General Augusto Santos, DOF Secretary Margarito Teves, DBM Secretary Romulo Neri and all the members of the Cabinet Tariff and Related Matters Committee for steadfastly supporting our advocacy of leveling the playing field for the downstream plastics industry.

The reduction in duty is a big relief to both the plastic producers and consumers as it will soften the impact of the 2 percent increase in the VAT rate this month and the rising cost of plastic resins in the world market. The reduction will lead to a 10 percent increase in consumption of plastic resins and will have a multiplier effect as plastic manufacturing go through many labor-intensive stages. These include the preparation of the plastic resins i.e. mixing with additives/ colorants or compounding before extruding, molding, forming or laminating the plastic product, and additional workers are needed for the cutting, printing, labeling, packing and warehousing stages. All these activities are expected to expand in the process.

Once again, thank you for helping the plastic industry during these difficult times as the issuance of EO 486 will not only preserve but generate more jobs.

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The Philippine Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery turns

50

Centennial Hall, The Manila Hotel, February 17, 2006 (Friday) 1:00 PM

GOLDEN JUBILEE PROGRAM

1:00 pm **Mass**

2:00 pm **Opening of Art & Booth Exhibits**

3:00 pm **Snacks**

3:30 pm **Inspirational Talks**
Dr. Tierry F. Garcia
Dr. Ariston G. Bautista
Dr. Napoleon C. Ejercito

4:15 pm **PSO-HNS Clinical Practice Guidelines Ratification**
Dr. Ruzanne M. Caro & Dr. Jose M. Acuin

5:00 pm **MOA Signing of Kalusugang Ear Nose and Throat (PSO-HNS and ULCH)**
Dr. Natividad A. Almazan-Aguilar

5:30 pm **Dinner Lecture**

6:00 pm **Anniversary Dinner Ball**
Invocation / National Anthem
St. Luke's VSSC ENT Choir
Welcome Address and Cordial Greetings
Dr. Cesar V. Villafuerte Jr.
Cordial Greetings from PBO-HNS President
Dr. Abelardo B. Perez
DVD Presentation of the PSO-HNS Today
Dr. Peter R. Jarin
Special Presentation
St. Luke's VSSC ENT Singers
Toast
Dr. Natividad A. Almazan-Aguilar
Awards
Dr. Jacob S. Matubis

- *Recognition to Founders (Heroic 9)*
- *Recognition to Past Presidents*

Presentation of the PSO-HNS Chapters

Closing Remarks and Invitation to Dance
Dr. Felix P. Nolasco

Live Band

Masters of Ceremonies:
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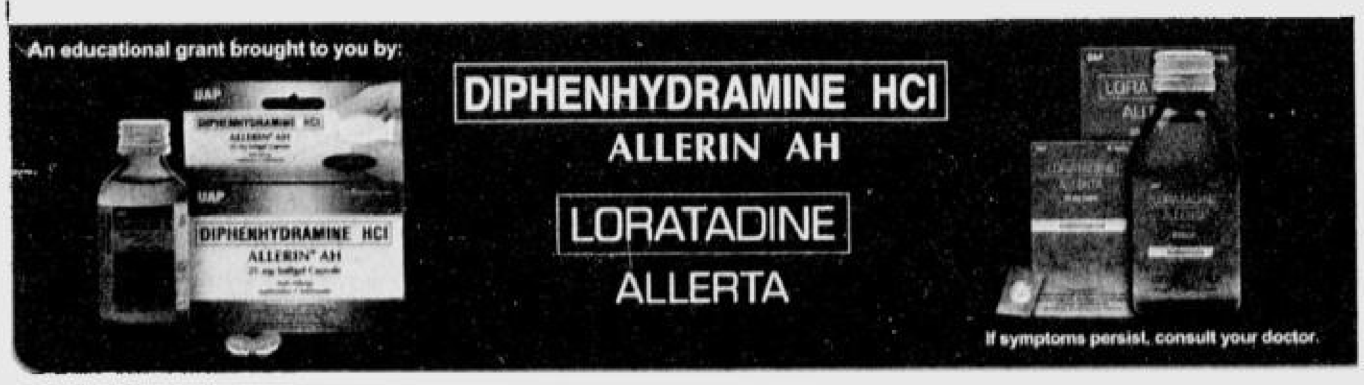
Dr. Alberto Calderon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February 17, 2006 marks another milestone in our history as we celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the Centennial Hall of The Manila Hotel. Join us as we pay tribute to the founding fathers who bravely fought and stood firm through the more challenging phases of the society's life.

This is also the most opportune time to reaffirm our commitment and uphold our mission as a premier specialty group on Otolaryngology.

The Kalusugang Ear Nose and Throat will be launched to stimulate awareness and provide basic education about common E.N.T. diseases among laymen. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I invite everyone to attend this historic event.

Natividad A. Almazan-Aguilar, MD, MSClin.Epi
President, PSO-HNS, Inc.

On behalf of the organizing committee of the Golden Anniversary Celebration , I wish to welcome all the fellows and guests to the 50th Anniversary of the PSO-HNS, Inc. This is indeed a very momentous occasion for our surgical specialty as we gather together to give honor to our "Heroic 9" founders and to all the past presidents of our society, as well as to remember and treasure the history of our organization as it traveled through the years.

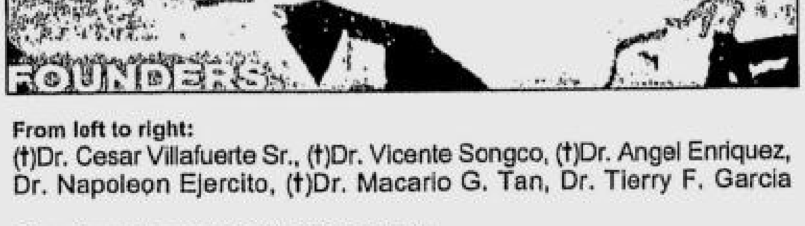
May God bless the PSO-HNS! Mabuhay!

Cesar V. Villafuerte Jr., MD, MHA
Past President, PSO-HNS, Inc.
Chair, Golden Anniversary Committee

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Standing from left to right:
Alexander C. Cabungcal, MD (Secretary), Felix P. Nolasco, MD (Immediate Past President), Gil M. Vicente, MD, Jacob S. Matubis, MD, Romeo L. Villarta Jr., MD, Alfredo Q.Y. Pontejos Jr., MD, William L. Lim, MD (Auditor) and Antonio H. Chua, MD (Treasurer)

Sitting from left to right:
Eutrapio S. Guevara Jr., MD, Abelardo B. Perez, MD (PBO-HNS President), Natividad A. Aguilar, MD (PSO-HNS President), Charlotte M. Chiong, MD (Vice-President) and Francisco A. Victoria, MD



From left to right:
(†)Dr. Cesar Villafuerte Sr., (†)Dr. Vicente Songco, (†)Dr. Angel Enriquez, Dr. Napoleon Ejercito, (†)Dr. Macario G. Tan, Dr. Tierry F. Garcia

Other founding members (not in photo):
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Lethal bird flu virus spreads to Africa

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PARIS—MORE EUROPEAN NATIONS ARE TAKING precautionary measures as bird flu spreads, with a Greek duck hunter undergoing tests to confirm whether he is the first person on the continent to contract the potentially lethal virus.

Avian flu, which was first identified in Southeast Asia, has also spread to Africa with Nigeria admitting Monday that it was struggling to cope with the first known African outbreak.

The 160-plus known human cases worldwide have been contracted by people handling infected poultry but health experts fear the virus is close to mutating into a human-to-human form capable of killing millions.

After the often-lethal H5N1 strain turned up in wild birds in four southern European countries in recent days, the European Union attempted to reassure people the threat was under control even as the disease continued to spread.

Leading poultry farms in France, Europe's biggest poultry producer, said on Monday they were preparing to lay off staff as "irrational" fears about bird flu took their toll on consumption.

Demand this year has fallen by 12 percent compared to the same period in 2005, Poultry Industry Federation president Alain Melot said.

Although no cases of bird flu have been detected in France and eating chicken poses no risk of infection, free-range producers have been even harder hit, with consumption down 30 percent.

Nearly all the 90 deaths linked since 1997 to H5N1, the most virulent of more than a dozen bird-flu strains, have been in China and Southeast Asia.

However, last month four people succumbed to the disease in eastern Turkey and two in northern Iraq.

Nigerian health officials said suspected cases of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu were cropping up across the country but defended their failure to close poultry markets.

Traders were free to transport and sell chicken across most of the country, three days after United Nations veterinary experts urged the government to clamp down in order to halt the spread of the highly infectious virus.

Health Minister Eyitayo Lambo and his officials told reporters scientists were analyzing samples taken from sick poultry in five more states after last week confirming the presence of the disease in three.

An official monitoring the epidemic, Nasidi Abdussalam, said more cases were being investigated near Nigeria's northern frontier with Niger.

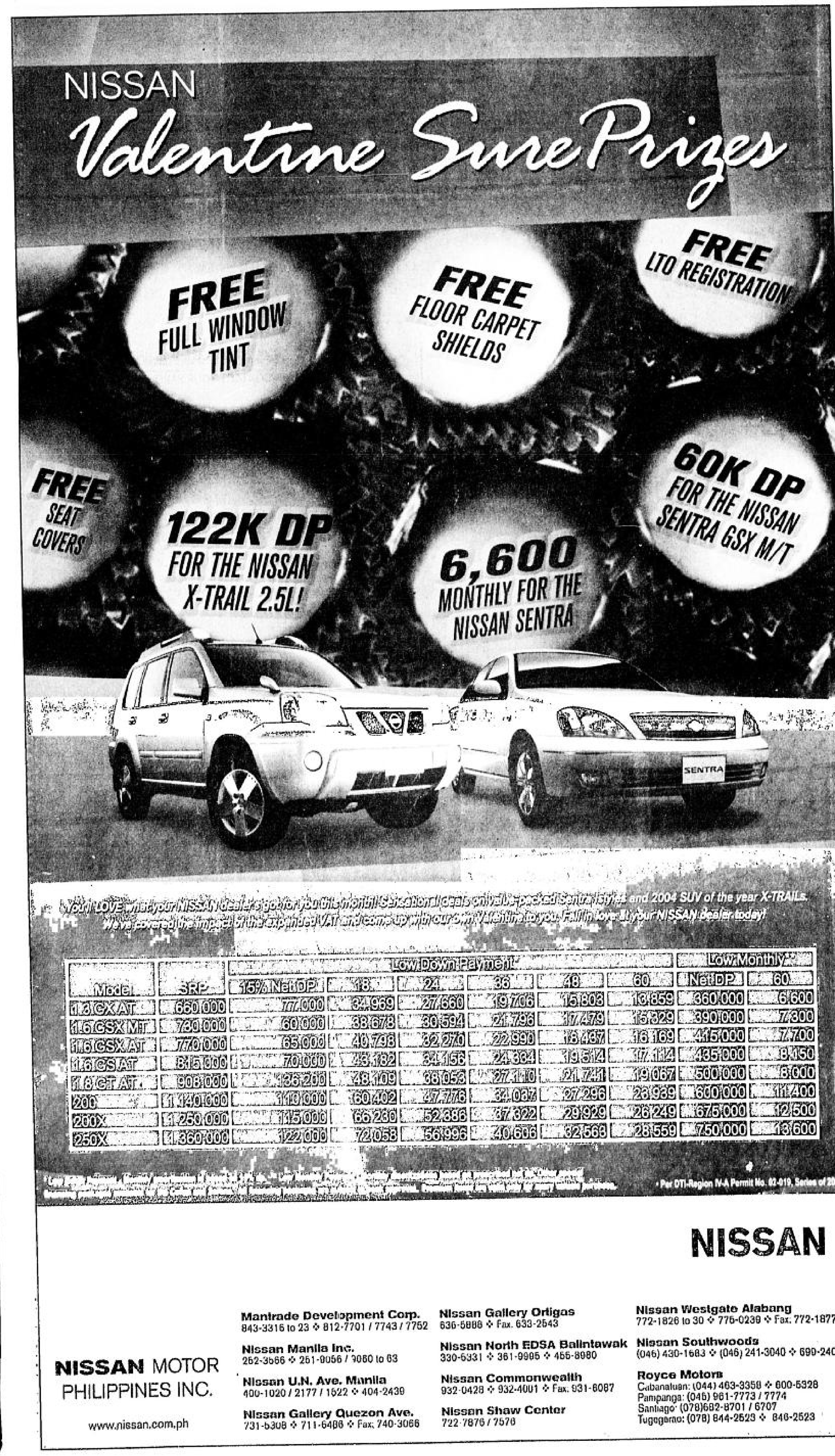
If confirmed they will show that the first outbreak of the H5N1 virus in Africa has spread through most of the north of the country and entered the Niger River basin.

Elsewhere in west Africa, Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade called for a "huge mobilization" against bird flu, notably with increased border controls.

In Europe, with cold winter weather blamed for pushing migratory birds further south than usual, Italy announced that a sixth wild swan tested positive for H5N1, according to press reports Monday.

Tests have also confirmed H5N1 in wild migrating swans in Bulgaria and Greece, as well as the more general H5 virus in Slovenia.

However, initial tests on a dead swan found in northern Belgium came back negative and two of three dead swans from Bosnia were given the all clear. *AFP*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1.6 GSX AT	770,000	65,000	40,798	32,270	22,990	18,437	16,169	415,000	7,700
1.6 GS AT	815,000	70,000	43,182	34,156	24,384	19,514	17,114	435,000	8,150
1.8 GT AT	908,000	136,200	48,109	38,053	27,110	21,741	19,067	500,000	8,000
200	1,140,000	110,000	60,402	47,776	34,037	27,296	23,939	600,000	11,400
200X	1,250,000	115,000	66,230	52,386	37,322	29,929	26,249	675,000	12,500
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Cheney lacked hunting license

WASHINGTON—US VICE PRESIDENT Dick Cheney did not have a legal permit to hunt quail when he accidentally shot a 78-year-old hunting partner over the weekend, the White House said on Monday.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department informed Cheney that he lacked a stamp for hunting "upland game birds" in the state when the shooting incident occurred, the vice president's office said in a statement.

Texas authorities said they would issue a warning citation to Cheney but impose no penalty or fine for failing to have the $7 stamp.

The revelation was sure to aggravate a public relations headache for the White House, already under criticism for waiting a day to disclose the shooting incident.

Cheney shot prominent lawyer Harry Whittington in the neck and chest with birdshot on Saturday as the two were out quail hunting on a Texas ranch.

Whittington's condition was improving and described as "stable" by doctors at Christus Spohn Hospital Memorial, where he was treated for wounds to his shoulder, upper body, chest and neck.

News of the shooting was first revealed not by the White House but by the owner of the south-Texas ranch, Katharine Armstrong, where the incident took place. Armstrong spoke to the local newspaper, the Corpus Christi Caller-Times, which had called her after getting a tip.

President George W. Bush's spokesperson Scott McClellan as well as Cheney spokesperson Lea Anne McBride insisted that the delay between the incident and its confirmation by the White House was due to a focus on securing Whittington medical care.

McClellan also said that details about the shooting were trickling in throughout the night and that the White House needed "to get the facts together."

"It was an accident. Unfortunately, these types of hunting accidents do happen from time to time," the spokesperson told a frequently contentious briefing with reporters.

Asked why getting Whittington medical attention was incompatible with releasing details of the incident, McClellan said that the vice president's office had "worked to get that information out."

But the Caller-Times reported Monday that McBride, after confirming the incident around noon on Sunday, had refused to say whether the vice president's office would have disclosed the incident if the daily had not contacted her after getting a tip from an unnamed Armstrong family member.

"I'm not going to speculate," the daily quoted her as saying.

Confirming Armstrong's account, local police and state game officials said the vice president had spun around to target a bird and shot his fellow hunter instead. *AFP*

Turkey museum exhibits world's oldest love poem

ISTANBUL—IT IS AS TINY AS the sleekest mobile phones that fit in the palm of the hand, but its message is anything but modern. A small tablet in a special display this month in the Istanbul Museum of the Ancient Orient is thought to be the oldest love poem ever found, the words of a lover from more than 4,000 years ago.

The ancient Sumerian tablet was unearthed in the late 1880s in Nippur, a region in what is now Iraq, and had been resting quietly in a modest corner of the museum until it was brought back to the limelight this year by a company that made it part of a Valentine's Day promotion.

The poem sits among Sumerian documents such as a court verdict from 2030 BC breaking an engagement, a property sale and documentation of a murder. Despite the tablets' ancient lineage, they had gone relatively unnoticed by most museum visitors until the company provided the money to make it the centerpiece of a special exhibit.

"It must be written by a man desperately in love with the rich princess," guessed Choi Na-kyoung, 27, a tourist from South Korea, examining the love poem on clay on a recent day. But she was mistaken.

The tablet in fact contains a daring—and risque—ballad in which a priestess professes her love for a king, though it is believed that the words are in fact a script for a ceremonial recreation of a fable by the priestess and the king, Su-Sin. The priestess represents Inanna, the Goddess of Love and Fertility, and the king represents Dumuzi, the God of Shepherds, on the eve of their union.

"Bridegroom, dear to my heart, Goodly is your beauty, honeysweet,'" the first line in the cuneiform tablet reads. "'You have captivated me, let me stand trembling before you; Bridegroom, I would be taken to the bedchamber."

He apparently does. "Bridegroom, you have taken your pleasure of me," the poem continues. "Tell my mother, she will give you delicacies; my father, he will give you gifts." *New York Times News Service*

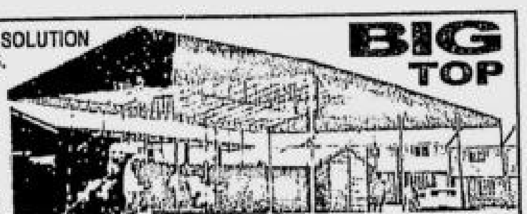
Saddam goes on hunger strike

BAGHDAD—SADDAM HUSSEIN AND THREE former officials in his regime on Tuesday told the court trying them they were on a hunger strike in protest of the judge overseeing the proceedings.

Saddam said he had not eaten in three days, while his former intelligence chief, Ibrahim Barzan, said he had not eaten for two days. Two other defendants, Awad Bandar and former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, also said they were on strike.

Their claims of a hunger strike could not be independently confirmed. The defendants are being held under US detention and US officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

But investigative judge Raid Juhi did not deny that the defendants were refusing food when asked about the strike. *AP*



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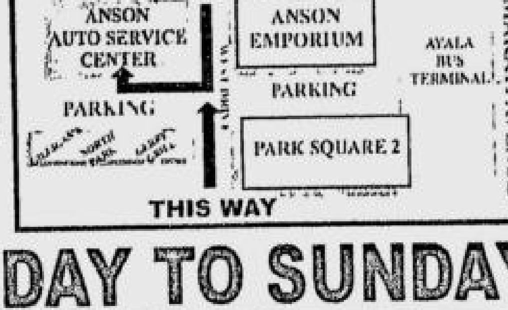

OPEN MONDAY TO SUNDAY

Iran defies West, starts enrichment work

VIENNA—IRAN HAS RESTARTED URANIUM enrichment work by putting its feedstock gas into centrifuges, defying the West with a program that could make nuclear reactor fuel or atom bomb material, diplomats told AFP Monday.

It came as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted his country was not worried about possible sanctions and Tehran said talks in Moscow aimed at finding a compromise to the long-running international standoff would not go ahead as planned later this week.

Uranium enrichment is seen as a red line by the United States and European Union in the dispute over Iran's nuclear program, as it is crucial to making atomic weapons.

Putting uranium hexafluoride (UF6) gas into centrifuges, which distill out enriched uranium, is a major escalation by Iran, and comes amid threats by the Islamic republic to withdraw from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In an interview published Monday, Ahmadinejad said that nations calling for economic sanctions would lose far more than Tehran.

"I believe those who want to impose limitations on us will lose more than us," he told USA Today newspaper in an interview conducted Saturday.

Separately, Iran said Thursday's planned talks between Tehran and Moscow on a compromise to enrich uranium on Tehran's behalf in Russia, so that it would not acquire the strategic technology, would not go ahead.

Russia however said talks could still be held.

The United States and EU governments fear Iran's nuclear program could hide atomic weapons development, a claim strongly denied by Tehran which says it is for strictly peaceful civilian nuclear power.

Iran had earlier Monday said it would resume uranium enrichment even before the UN watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meets in Vienna next month to decide whether to recommend UN Security Council action.

Meanwhile French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin arrived in Moscow for a 24-hour visit due to include talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Villepin said in an interview published Monday in a Russian newspaper that the international community was willing to negotiate with Iran on the nuclear crisis if Tehran took steps to end the standoff.

But diplomats' comments in Vienna appear to show Iran is following through with its threat to carry out enrichment.

"Iran has put gas into centrifuges at its pilot enrichment plant in Natanz," one diplomat said.

The diplomat, who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue, said Iran had not yet fired up the whole 164-centrifuge cascade but had "over the past two or three days" started work with some centrifuges.

A second diplomat said Iran was doing "preliminary work" with "stand-alone" centrifuges, almost certainly putting uranium gas into single machines rather than a whole cascade.

The diplomat said this was necessary in a step-by-step approach involving first getting centrifuges running, then operating a pilot plant, which Iran has dubbed research work, and then moving on to industrial-scale enrichment with thousands of centrifuges.

Iran says it wants to produce low enriched uranium, which is not refined enough for weapons.

But it wants to install over 50,000 centrifuges at Natanz, an array which could produce enough highly enriched uranium every two or three weeks for one atom bomb.

IAEA inspectors are Tuesday to visit Natanz, where Iran is threatening to remove surveillance seals and cameras, diplomats said.

But one diplomat said some seals and surveillance cameras would remain in place as they would be monitoring the production of nuclear fuel rather than enrichment.

Although Iran had suspended uranium enrichment work until talks with an EU negotiating troika broke down last month, it has since August been making the feedstock UF6 at a conversion plant in Isfahan.

The West has seemed ready to let Tehran pursue this work, which technically is part of the activities the EU says should be suspended, as long as it did not actually enrich.

The IAEA's 35-nation board of governors voted Feb. 4 to report Iran to the Security Council, but left a one-month window for diplomacy on getting it to return to a full suspension of enrichment-related work and cooperate more with IAEA inspectors. *AFP*

CUPID-STRUCK
Veiled Bangladeshi girls walk with flowers on Valentine's Day in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Feb. 14. Valentine's Day is being celebrated in this Muslim-majority, traditionally Conservative country. AP

Protests mar Haiti vote counting

PORT-AU-PRINCE—AN ERUPTION OF GUNfire left one person dead Monday in Port-au-Prince, amid protests over the result of Haiti's presidential election.

UN peacekeepers deployed around the Haitian capital, where crowds protested partial results that showed front-runner Rene Preval narrowly missing the 50 percent he needs to be elected president without going to a second round.

Television footage showed the lifeless body of a man wearing a bloodied T-shirt with the picture of Rene Preval, a former president who enjoys widespread support among the poor.

A UN spokesperson denied claims by demonstrators that a member of the 9,500-strong UN Stabilization Force in Haiti (Minustah) shot at protesters, saying the troops had only fired two shots in the air.

Spokesperson David Wimhurst said gunfire erupted after the troops had left the immediate vicinity of the incident, near Port-au-Prince's international airport.

There were also reports that several people were wounded.

At one stage, a small group of protesters hurled rocks at a Nigerian peacekeeper, who emerged unhurt and eventually managed to calm down the crowd.

Preval followers used car wrecks, rocks and burning tires to block major avenues, paralyzing the city and causing businesses to shutter their doors.

The situation calmed down after word spread that Preval had flown in from his hometown of Marmelade. Preval held talks with UN Special Envoy Juan Gabriel Valdez at the airport before heading to the presidential palace to discuss the situation with interim President Boniface Alexandre.

Meanwhile, Brazil, which leads the UN force, asked the United States to organize a UN Security Council meeting on the new tensions in Haiti. The United States, council president for February, urged Haitians to respect the outcome of the elections.

Crowds gathered outside the headquarters of the Provisional Electoral Offices (CEP) demanding that Preval be declared president immediately and claiming the vote count was fraudulent.

They also stormed the gates of the Montana hotel, where the CEP had announced partial results in past days. Demonstrators jumped into the pool of the luxury hotel, and danced on the tennis court, chanting "Preval president." UN helicopters landed reinforcements on the roof.

Former South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu urged the demonstrators to remain calm and leave the hotel, which they eventually did.

"You must show the world that you abhor fighting," the Nobel peace laureate said, speaking from a hotel terrace. *AFP*

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French doctors to study Joan of Arc's ashes

French Dr. Philippe Charlier displays the supposed remains of 15th century French heroine Joan of Arc, Feb.13, in Garches, west of Paris. The barrage of tests led by Charlier could shed light on what are believed to be the remains of the 19-year-old, mainly bones and skin recovered from the fire that consumed her in 1431 in Rouen. AP

PARIS—FRENCH DOCTORS ARE TO study the ashes of the 15th-century maiden-warrior Joan of Arc, who was burned at the stake at age 19, in a quest for new insight into the extraordinary life of a young woman who became a national icon.

Philippe Charlier, the forensic scientist behind the project, told AFP that his team would spend six months analyzing relics said to be from her fire, including bone fragments, human tissue and wood.

By studying the relics' biochemical and molecular makeup, they hope to precisely date and authenticate them but also perhaps to discover new facts about the French military heroine made a saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

A combination of carbon dating techniques and analysis of pollen traces will allow them to pinpoint the relics' age down to the exact year and month.

"We will be able to say: these are the remains of a woman who died in Rouen (in northern France), aged 19, who died in 1431 around May 30, and who was burned three times in the same day," Charlier said.

If all of the above can be confirmed, he said, "we will know with near certainty that this is indeed Joan of Arc."

Born to a humble home in eastern France but inspired by what she believed to be divine voices, Joan of Arc (1412-1431) helped France to wrest the advantage back from England toward the end of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453).

Wounded in battle, she was captured and sold to the English, to be convicted of heresy and burned at the stake.

Joan of Arc's extraordinary destiny has been a source of fascination to French writers from Voltaire to the present day, who have recreated the Maid of Orleans, as she was known, as everything from a saint to the victim of a sinister Church plot.

Her claim to divine inspiration, and success in repulsing the English invader, made her a potent symbol of the emergence of the French nation.

She later became a mythical inspiration for France's Catholic nationalists and has been controversially adopted as the emblem of Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right National Front party, which celebrates her memory every year.

Charlier said however that he was driven purely by scientific curiosity and was unaffected by the tug-of-war over Joan of Arc's legacy.

"There is no nationalist goal behind this, no religious or political angle—it is just a scientific and historical investigation," he said.

Joan of Arc's ashes—preciously guarded by a French historical association and currently the property of the Roman Catholic Church authorities in Tours, southwest of Paris—are the only remaining traces of her.

"In reality, we know hardly anything of Joan of Arc. We do not even have a drawing of her—except an outline sketched at the bottom of a legal document," Charlier told Le Parisien newspaper.

"Even the armor attributed to her is actually largely posthumous."

Initially a figurehead who revealed herself as a true military leader, Joan of Arc led the French armies in lifting the English siege of Orleans in 1429, the first of a chain of swift victories that ended with the French dauphin's coronation as Charles VII.

She was rehabilitated by the Catholic Church a quarter-century after her death, and canonized in 1920. *AFP*

New fish species, seaweeds found off Caribbean

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO—SCIENTISTS have discovered what they believe is a new fish species and at least 20 types of previously unknown seaweeds during a recent expedition to one of the Caribbean's most diverse marine areas—a coral-covered underwater mountain off the Dutch island of Saba.

It could take a year before researchers confirm the findings, which local fishermen, working with the Dutch Antilles government, are hoping to use to lobby authorities to steer oil tankers away from the Saba Bank Atoll to protect their livelihoods and the rich underwater life.

During their two weeks at the atoll, divers braved 12-foot seas to plunge 30 meters under water twice daily to collect marine samples. Their efforts turned up unique striped patterns on the seaweeds and one fish that researchers believe is new to science: a goby with orange spots.

"We were literally discovering a species every day, that's truly remarkable," said Michael Smith, a senior research scientist at Conservation International, which funded the January expedition along with the Netherlands Ministry of Traffic and Water Management and Miami-based cruise operator Royal Caribbean's Ocean Fund.

"There aren't very many places where you can still do that in the Caribbean or very close to North America."

Not to be outdone by the fish discovery were the seaweed findings. Smith called the area "the epicenter of diversity for seaweeds in the Caribbean."

Mark Littler, a marine botanist at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, said his dives revealed landscapes that he compared to "mini rain forests." They swam through acres of red, green and brown seaweed—some that looked like ferns or were several feet high. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Blast kills 4 US soldiers

KABUL—Four US soldiers were killed in a bomb blast in insurgency-plagued Afghanistan Monday as five militia troops contracted to the US-led coalition and an Afghan soldier also died in attacks, officials said. A purported spokesperson for the Taliban, removed from government in a US-led operation in 2001, claimed responsibility on behalf of the ultra-Islamic movement for the blast against the American troops. They were on patrol in volatile Uruzgan province with the Afghan army when their Humvee vehicle hit a suspected improvised explosive device, the coalition said in a statement. "Shortly after the attack, the patrol was engaged with small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire. *AFP*

2 Kenyan ministers resign

NAIROBI—Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki on Monday accepted the resignations of two more senior Cabinet ministers implicated in massive corruption scandals that have rocked the east African nation. In a live televised address, Kibaki said Energy Minister Kiraitu Murungi and Education Minister George Saitoti had asked to resign after having been named as players in the so-called "Goldenberg" and "Anglo Leasing" scams. "I have today accepted the request by (Saitoti) to step aside from his responsibilities . . to pave the way for investigations into the issues raised in the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Goldenberg affair," he said. *AFP*

Man nabbed for Iraq abuse

LONDON—British military police have made an arrest in connection with a probe into video footage apparently showing British troops abusing civilians in Iraq, the defense ministry said Monday. A ministry spokesperson told AFP that the arrest was made Sunday "in conjunction with this investigation" but declined to say where it took place or confirm whether the person was a serving soldier. "The RMP (Royal Military Police) investigation into these extremely serious allegations is at very early stage," the spokesperson said. The ministry has ordered an "urgent investigation" into the video which aired on British television Sunday after the mass-circulation tabloid, News of the World, broke the story and showed photo stills from the video. *AFP*

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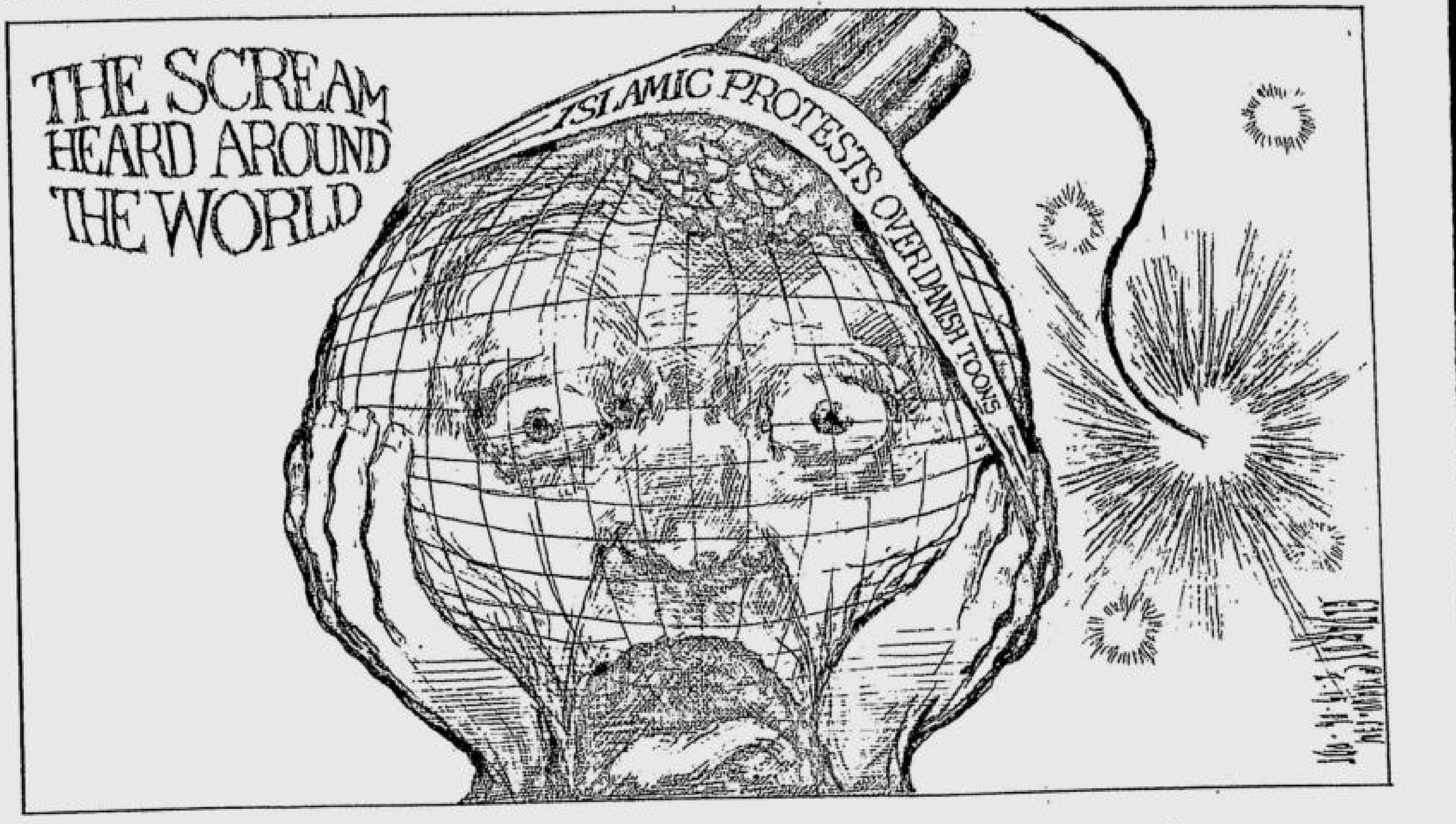
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EDITORIAL

LAST FRIDAY, A FUNERAL WAS HELD IN ROME FOR Fr. Andrea Santoro, a missionary priest killed the week before in Turkey. Camillo Cardinal Ruini of Rome announced at the funeral that he wanted to open the process for the beatification and eventual canonization of the priest. Santoro, he said, was a martyr. He was definitely a kind and pious man: Pope Benedict XVI ordered a letter Santoro wrote to him, on behalf of three Catholic women asking the Pope to visit their parish, published in L'Osservatore Romano, the official Vatican newspaper.

In Turkey, the person accused of killing Santoro "admitted that he was driven by hatred aroused by the publication of the caricatures of Mohammed published in the Western press," according to one press account. The accused murderer was under the impression that Santoro was actively trying to convert Muslims to Catholicism. In fact, the Italian's ministry was to attend to small, isolated Catholic communities in areas that once comprised the Catholic settlements of antiquity.

While praising the Christian virtues of Santoro, and proclaiming his worthiness to be considered a martyr—proof of which would immediately result in sainthood—Vatican officials have been careful not to lay blame at the doorstep of Islam, whether as a religion or a community. The kind of misunderstanding that would lead a man to kill another, in the name of God, all because of a profoundly irreligious act that took place a very long distance away, is in a sense a parable for our times. Thornton Wilder, in his short novel "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," tackled a profoundly religious question. In the book, a monk named Brother Juniper witnesses the "finest bridge in all Peru" collapse, killing five people. And he asks, "Why did it happen to those five?"

As a consequence of editorial cartoons being published in a Danish newspaper, the world has been asking the same question—in the Middle East, where, from Damascus and Teheran to Palestine and Baghdad, Muslims erupted in fury. Just as they did in Denmark itself, and all over Europe; and everywhere, from Pakistan and Indonesia to the Philippines, where Islamic communities are found. Days of anger and violence have resulted in the Islamic world engaging in soul-searching of its own. Yesterday, a meeting between the Danish prime minister and the leaders of Denmark's Muslim community led to calls on their co-religionists to "move on."

Excesses such as rioting and complications such as some irresponsible provocateurs inserting two cartoons (the most offensive ones) among the real cartoons circulated among Muslims aside, the Islamic world has been adamant about its belief that the Western press crossed the line. Non-Muslims have also observed that what the Western media attempted to paint as purely a question of freedom of expression was not that at all; it was a question of secular contempt for religious conventions.

While the Philippines adheres to the principle of the separation of Church and State, and indeed, the Philippine media are heir to a tradition of anticlericalism dating to the Propaganda Movement, as a whole, Filipinos are profoundly respectful of religious conventions. Even the bigotry of certain Filipinos toward their Islamic countrymen does not extend to flagrantly heaping contempt on their faith. There are lines Filipinos do not cross, and rightly so (if only we did not cross more of them than we already do).

Islam and Christianity both pay the highest tribute to martyrs. Even secular societies consider martyrdom possible in defense of country or ideology. The question is whether any kind of creed, including secularism as understood in the West, calls for provocations that make it inevitable for people to become martyrs, whether unintentionally or by design. While we do not counsel self-censorship arising out of fear, we do believe that a proper recognition of the central role faith plays in the lives of millions would go far to avoid undue provocation against people who take their religion seriously. After all, since World War II, the world has rallied to defend the Four Freedoms: of speech and expression; of every person to worship God in his own way; from want; and from fear. They all go hand in hand, and to raise one over the other diminishes them all.

What's a police community precinct for?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

(*Continued from last Monday*)

THE INTERSECTION ON COMMONWEALTH Avenue and Tandang Sora in Quezon City is a dangerous place to cross. Commonwealth slopes down here and vehicles coming from the Quezon Memorial Circle race down the incline as they battle for the commuters waiting for rides near the corner. There is a waiting shed farther up, but nobody uses it. There is a pedestrian lane and yellow boxes clearly marked on the pavement, but drivers pay no attention to them. They speed on as though in a race, and woe to pedestrians who happen to be in their way.

Even when there are traffic enforcers, they do not stop the vehicles to allow pedestrians to cross safely. Jeepneys stop right on top of the pedestrian lane, beside a big "Strictly No Loading/Unloading, SB" sign, to load and unload passengers. Barkers standing beside the sign call for passengers. The enforcers see all these but do nothing. The policemen in the police community precinct headquarters also see these but also do nothing.

The Metro Manila Development Authority tried to remedy the situation by constructing a pedestrian overpass across Commonwealth during the 2004 election campaign, with a big billboard announcing it to be a project of President Macapagal-Arroyo, complete with her smiling face. After the elections, construction was stopped and the billboard was taken away. The overpass remains unfinished and pedestrians still have to risk their lives when they cross the street.

I asked MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando about this, and he replied that he had suspended the construction because there were no more funds and also because the foot of the southern end of the overpass was in the wrong place. Commonwealth will be widened some more, he said, and the stairs going up the overpass will have to be moved nearer to the Mercury Drug Store and the KFC fast-food outlet.

Happily, there are signs that the widening of Commonwealth in the area will begin soon and the overpass will be finished. Meanwhile, can't the authorities tell the police and traffic enforcers to enforce traffic rules and stop vehicles at the pedestrian lane to allow pedestrians to cross safely?

I asked Fernando why the police in the community precinct headquarters do not help maintain orderly traffic, and he said the MMDA has not deputized them. "Maybe we will," he added.

I posed the same question to top police officials and they replied that it is the duty of every policeman to help maintain traffic whether or not he is deputized by the MMDA. They promised to look into the matter.

That was weeks ago. Until now, there has been no change in the behavior of the police or traffic enforcers, whether they are the MMDA's Blueshorts or City Hall's Yellowshirts.

What is a police community precinct for if it cannot impose law and order in its place of assignment? Is this not the reason it was put there in the first place? If people see drivers violating traffic rules with impunity in the presence of cops and traffic aides, they are tempted to also violate traffic rules. They lose respect for the law and the police.

When the widening of Commonwealth is completed, I suggest that the two waiting sheds be painted in the trademark "Fernando pink" to make them more visible. Also there should be benches so commuters can sit down while waiting and either a rope or steel railings should be put up to make them fall in line. Two more waiting sheds, one on each side of the street, at the eastern foot of the flyover should be built.

But can't the police keep the vendors on the sidewalk at the *talipapa* on Luzon Avenue so they don't spill out into the street and constrict the passage of vehicles?

The jeepney terminal at the corner of Tandang Sora should be removed. The Tandang Sora jeepney route can run from Aurora Boulevard to Novaliches, thus making the terminals behind the University of the Philippine campus and at the Commonwealth corner unnecessary. And the "No Parking, No Loading/Unloading" rule should be strictly enforced.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte should visit the place incognito so they can see for themselves what's going on.

* * *

The two-day air talks between the governments of the Philippines and Bahrain will begin tomorrow in Clark Air Base. According to sources, the Philippines is prepared to give Bahrain all it is asking for—to the detriment of overseas Filipino workers, local business and industry, and our national aviation policy.

Bahrain is a tiny island in the Persian Gulf that hosts only 30,000 OFWs and produces only 1,800 tourists to the Philippines each year. But its appetite is very big. Its flag carrier deploys 61,000 seats to Manila per year and now wants to increase this to 107,000. At the air talks, Bahrain will ask that the present four flights weekly on the Manila-Bahrain route be increased to 10 flights. It has existing rights to fly to Cebu and Clark twice weekly each but has never exercised those rights.

What should have priority is a new air agreement with Saudi Arabia, not with Bahrain. We have about a million OFWs in Saudi Arabia but Philippine Airlines announced a suspension of Manila-Riyadh flights because it has been losing on the route for decades. It has proposed instead a new Manila-Dubai-Saudi Arabia route. The Philippine air panel should concentrate on this instead of pampering the Bahrainis.

Zombied

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE ASKED ME RECENTLY WHY I hadn't surrendered to our 21st-century version of the 1960s British Invasion, which is the Oldies Invasion, and trekked to the shows featuring the hit groups of that decade.

For several reasons, I said. One is that though I like to indulge in nostalgia like the next fellow, I do not like to indulge in perpetual nostalgia and cling to the popular music of my generation like a drowning man. The oldies passed on into the oldies because they got old. Time moved on, and went to other things, and some of those things weren't so bad. As Billy Joel says in "Keeping the Faith," "Cause the good old days weren't always good/ And tomorrow ain't as bad as it seems."

A more important reason is that if the point is reliving the past, watching these shows pretty much wrecks it. I do not get to relive the past that way, I get only to be acutely aware of the gap between then and now. The past does not rush in with the resuscitating force of an adrenaline fix, it fades away like an aging soldier. The reality check comes like a sledgehammer striking the head. Better just listen to the old records—or in whatever form they exist now, not least in MP3 downloadable from Limewire. That's where the past lives again in all its pristine glory.

I don't mean by reality check the shock of seeing the young ones now looking young once, though that can be a little disconcerting sometimes. Everyone grows old. I do, and look a little more ancient than I am. Or so in body—I've never really felt it despite the gout. It's more the shock of seeing people grown ancient in spirit than in body. I started a DVD of Don McLean last year and couldn't finish it. It wasn't that he had grown puffy, it was that he had grown fluffy. Where did the guy who wrote "American Pie" and who said in one of his songs, "For I will not be part of the cocktail generation ... I'm bowing out, I need a second chance" go? He couldn't be that pudgy-sensibility-wise-fellow in front of me!

But I did capitulate at last to the Zombies, who played here over the last few days. The reason is that, next to the Beatles and Rolling Stones, the Zombies were the United Kingdom's most important musical export in the 1960s. Two of the Beatles are dead, but Paul McCartney is still alive and kicking. So are the Rolling Stones, their concert in the United States last year being sold out months in advance. I doubt they can be brought over to this country soon, the cost probably being humongous. And I don't quite know if McCartney has forgiven this country for being chased out of it by a mob led by Marcos' henchmen, when the Beatles gigged here in the 1960s. So I thought the next best thing would be to watch the Zombies. Maybe the spark of genius was still there.

The genius was in sheer abundance when they first burst into the scene in the mid-1960s. "Burst on the scene" is the only way to describe it. I recall somebody writing that the Zombies began at the top and worked their way to the bottom. "She's Not There" was an instant hit as well indeed as many of the other songs they wrote in the first flush of inspiration. They would suffer a dissipation of talent over the next two or three years and dim out like a meteor. But at the top of their form, they blazed so furiously they were being talked about as the group to knock out the Beatles in the pantheon of rock. Few other groups had the same range and versatility. Later Jim Morrison and Ray Manzarek would combine voice and keyboard to produce the music of The Doors. But well before them, Colin Blunstone and Rod Argent would do exactly that and produce, well, the magic of the Zombies.

I was in high school at the time, and I still remember the excitement with which we listened to the Zombies songs and tried to play them on guitar. The group didn't just have subtlety and finesse, courtesy of Blunstone's breathy voice and Argent's intricate keyboard runs (he grew up on American blues and jazz), it also had a tough and wiry edge to it, extending the possibilities of rock. Hard to believe now after Led Zeppelin and the metal rockers of the 1970s, but in the mid-1960s we thought the Zombies were wild and loud! They were certainly iconoclastic and subversive, the true signs of rock.

Did the Zombies concert (I saw the one in Araneta) give off sparks of what they once were? Well, yes and no. Blunstone still has one of the best voices around, but he has lost much of its depth and mystery. It's not just that he's lost the breathiness or airiness, it's much more than that. He's lost a great deal of its spirit. An impression that was deepened by the songs he sang from the 1970s, after the Zombies broke up and Blunstone and Argent went their separate ways, Argent forming his own band and Blunstone joining other groups. The dissipation of talent became even more palpable, the songs passing on from classic to mediocre, from rebellious to conformist, from rock to karaoke. How could they have risen so high and fallen so low?

I understand that when they were no longer making hits in the 1960s, they began asking themselves what they were doing wrong, or at least what they stopped doing right. The answer was right there before them, in the Beatles and the Rolling Stones which would go on and break records in longevity. To this day, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards are still rocking and rolling. They did lose something, the Zombies, and that was the capacity to reinvent themselves, to subvert themselves. They became, well, zombies.

The last song they sang last Monday by way of encore was "How We Were Before." It begins: "Party's over, dawn breaking gradually through on us/ Shows us how we were before."

I kind of thought it was a fitting commentary to a lot more than the close of the concert.

A frenzy of assigning blame

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE STAMPEDE AT ULTRA, IN WHICH 74 PEOPLE were crushed to death and up to 500 others were injured, has ignited a feeding frenzy in the media in search of scapegoats.

Two weeks after the tragedy, an immediate investigation launched by the government is still far from determining criminal responsibility for the loss of human lives; the proprietors of ABS-CBN, sponsor of the "Wowowee" show, after pledging that the network "would take care of all costs," have not come up with concrete offers of compensation; and a number of theories have been put forward to try to explain the disaster.

What seems clear, however, is that the explanations tend to spread the blame, like in fish trawling, over a wide area of explanations, including sociological or pseudo-sociology, tracing the tragedy to poverty, blaming the government, the victims, and, worst of all, the flawed Filipino culture of jumping the queue and fostering mendicancy.

Historically speaking, the aftermath of the Ultra tragedy is no different than that of a long chain of previous disasters, including mudslides, flooding, marine disasters and forest fires, and fires in overcrowded discos (like the one in Quezon City several years ago). In all these, what has been predictable is the feeding frenzy of blame whose targets include government neglect, depletion of forests by predatory loggers, laxity in enforcing safety regulations.

No one, as far as I can remember, has been appropriately punished, and the most ridiculous compensation was the P10,000 awarded to each of the victims of the Ozone Disco, following a guilty verdict handed down by a Quezon City court for something like homicide or physical injuries due to "reckless imprudence"—one possible charge mentioned by the Department of Justice in the case of the Ultra tragedy.

The above outcomes make me cynical that the inquiry into the Ultra incident would turn out to be different. I regret to say that I am not equal to the task of following all the convoluted theories advanced by a number of seemingly learned persons who have been invoking connections between the incident and the dynamics of mob psychology, "the damaged Filipino culture," and the responsibility of mass media—especially TV—in providing the public useful visual information other than mass entertainment, based on song and dance and corny ad libs and dialogue.

Sometimes one has to rest his mind from all the demands of going through complex explanations by those who appear to be learned. All I am interested in—and I suspect it is what the public wants—are simple results, like pinning direct responsibility for the sad episode so that the victims can be compensated and, more importantly, so that the tragedy will not be repeated, and making TV networks stop their cut-throat competition for ratings that forces them to cram crowds into virtual death traps.

It appears that in the course of blame-seeking, the tragedy has been seized by the government as an opportunity for settling political scores with ABS-CBN and used as an occasion by those holding strong political biases to grind their ideological and political axes.

There are a few straightforward facts that are being ignored in this frenzy to look for scapegoats. First, the venue of the ABS-CBN show can hold only 18,000 people and twice that number had gathered trying to get in. The overcrowding was a recipe for disaster. The potential for stampede was aggravated by the fact that the program provided incentives for panic: raffle tickets that offered up to more than P1 million worth of prices to be distributed to a few.

There was a stampede for those limited number of tickets. In that excited atmosphere, a little commotion could spark a stampede, even a riot. In a stampede, any expectation of orderly behavior is an idle wish. To trace the stampede to the disgusting Filipino behavior of jumping the queue is to exhibit flatulence. Blaming our "damaged culture" for some spontaneous outbreak of disorder is stretching theory too far. Please, let us leave our theorizing to academic seminars.

Gratuitous is the lame excuse of ABS-CBN program managers that it was only giving the crowd "what it wants" and that the lottery was a public service that gave "hope" to the poor to gain a windfall so they can "escape poverty." Impressionistic evidence suggests that most of the fans of the program don't go there for the contents. Many go there for the chance to hit the jackpot. The same incentive is offered by the lotto and sweepstakes.

Hope is not an original explanation. The great lover Casanova is credited for initiating the lottery. He sold the idea to the French king that lottery was a good way to bolster state revenues to finance wars. When asked by the skeptical king how it would work, Casanova said, "Hope, sir."

The finding of the investigation of the government task force that the crowd was "exploited, manipulated and treated like animals" does not explain the stampede. It was a conclusion prompted by self-defense that instantly shifted the blame to ABS-CBN, which has not always been friendly to the administration.

The flak was not slow in coming. There were those who immediately blamed the Arroyo administration for not doing enough to alleviate poverty. So, the poor had to die in the stampede for a chance to grab some windfalls.

The first lesson we learn from this stampede is that blame is interminable.

Romance at a certain age

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

FOR WOMEN OF A CERTAIN AGE, ROMANCE doesn't come like rain showers—frequent and unexpected—but rather like a stream in the desert: you have to look for it and when you find it, you have to make the most of it.

Just the other night, my husband and I were getting ready for bed and he started complaining about a bruise on his knee, wondering when and how he got it. I took a look at it and said: "It's just like the one I have," showing him a similar dark spot on my knee. "It comes from pressing our knees against our dining table," I explained. Our new table, if you must know, comes with benches instead of chairs, and we've both taken to putting our feet up whenever we eat, our knees pressed against the table for balance.

My husband took a look at my bruise and marveled: "Wouldn't you know, we have the same spot in the same part of the body. I like that!"

It was the most romantic line I'd heard in ages.

As you can guess by now, one's definition of romance evolves as one ages. I never thought so when I was younger, but you do arrive at the stage in life when the conventional expressions of romance—roses, chocolates, jewelry and serenades—actually seem sappy and cheesy, love expressed as clichés, uncreative and predictable. Nowadays, I much prefer simple, practical expressions of love, gestures and actions that don't necessarily come with Hallmark card sentiments, but are far more eloquent.

* * *

I MAY have thrown a surprise party for the hubby on his 50th birthday, but he topped that some years ago when I arrived from a month-long fellowship in the United States and found that he had secretly enlarged and renovated the master bath. We had talked about redoing our narrow and cramped bathroom for years, but I never thought that while I was away, he would spend his bonus money on a home improvement project.

He swore the kids to secrecy, and when I called a few days before my trip home, asking him what he wanted for *pasalubong*, he told me to bring home red bath towels. They turned out to be the finishing touch for our new bathroom, which he had furnished with a gleaming new red bathtub. I walked into the house and was led directly to the master bath, and in the next few days, I would make every excuse to enter the bathroom, basking in my new, surprise gift.

My sisters and cousins in the States, hearing about the surprise that awaited me upon arrival, nearly swooned at the news. (Again, women our age swoon over bathroom renovations, not roses and champagne.) "*Mabuti pa si Pie*," they would sigh.

But my brother-in-law had a message for him: "Please tell Pie not to do something like that again, we're beginning to look bad to our wives!"

* * *

BUT our husbands can't renovate bathrooms every day or even every year, and as the years roll on, even just holding hands in public seems beneath your dignity. For women of a certain age, and a certain inclination, romance must then be sought for, grasped wherever and whenever they can find it.

For me and a widening circle of friends and family, romance comes by way of "Koreanovelas," the same serials that air over local channels but which we watch by way of DVD sets with English subtitles, to be followed at our own pace and at leisure.

Whenever my family starts ragging me about my current obsession over "Koreanovelas," I retort that each of us has our own obsessions but I never say anything about their fishing and saxophone playing, their Ipod downloading and fan fiction writing. "I don't get on your case, so get off mine," I warn. "You should be thankful I don't go ballroom dancing and employ a dance instructor," I throw in, though I must say that I don't think there's necessarily anything wrong with hiring men to dance with you.

But I recently came upon a story that puts even my fascination with "Koreanovelas" and their "spoony stars" (as a badly translated blurb puts it) to shame.

* * *

A READER who likewise follows Korean romantic serials says she exchanges e-mail with three US-based Filipinas, all of them members of a Singapore-based forum on Korean dramas and related topics.

Recently, she writes, "I was roused from my sleep by one of my friends" who wanted to know if she could help the friend find a taped copy of the soundtrack of the Koreanovela "Hotelier" (which just ended on Channel 11, by the way), starring Bae Yong Jun, a superstar of the Hallyu or Korean wave. The friend's mother, it turns out, had just passed away at the age of 92. Before her death, the old woman loved to watch Yonsama (as Bae is known by Japanese fans) in "Hotelier," and before she passed away had requested her family to play the drama's musical theme during her wake and burial.

"She had also told her daughter that she wanted to meet the character in that drama in her next life!" the reader writes. "My friend later told me that in the homily during her funeral, the priest also mentioned how the deceased loved the drama and the actor so much!"

And while she protests that she hasn't yet reached this level of fanaticism, the reader says she was able to find the soundtrack and send it to her frantic friend.

Which gives me an idea. I had initially toyed with asking my family to use the theme from the musical "Rent" for my funeral, but the old lady's request is tempting. Imagine going to meet your Maker with the romantic themes from your favorite serials floating in the air, images of the "spoony" Yonsama escorting you to the Afterlife.

If our husbands had any good sense in them, they would take this as a broad hint. We may protest that romance no longer holds any practical attraction for us, but like finding a stream in the desert, when you find the waters, you want to jump in and refresh yourself. Even if only on the small screen.

A fencing party in Madrid

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

LA SOLIDARIDAD, THE NEWSPAPER (NOT THE famous bookstore on Padre Faura run by Frankie and Tessie Jose), is the last thing you will bring to the beach to read. The multi-volume, hard-cover, coated-paper, parallel language text edition is so heavy you cannot even read it comfortably in bed. You must sit up and use a table to consult it.

Since La Solidaridad has century-old news, it is usually read for research and out of patriotism rather than pleasure, which is unfortunate because it contains many little items of interest: poems, obituaries, notices, etc. We are all familiar with the political articles of Rizal, Del Pilar, Antonio Luna, etc., but what about the other articles?

Antonio Luna wrote a number of essays on life in Madrid that he later compiled in a small book "Impresiones." There are other forgotten stories like an account of a *despedida* for Juan Luna some time in June 1890 before he moved to Paris.

Marco Espada is the byline under the article, "Un asalto en el atelier Luna." It is probably a pseudonym, but it is obviously written by a swordsman or at least someone who understood the art of fencing. Espada described a fencing party in the Luna studio in Ventura de la Vega Street in Madrid and gave a list of those in attendance: Llorente, Ponce, Lete, Dimayuga, Puatu, Apacible and, of course, the Luna brothers, Juan and Antonio. Everyone was identified only by their surnames, which suggests that all the readers of La Solidaridad (it must have been very few) knew who they were. Espada noted that the Filipinos attended different fencing schools in Madrid—Sanz, Carbonell and Zuavo—and one could tell by the way they handled a sword what school they came from:

"The contests began with an exciting game between the Luna brothers. Although both are amateurs, they showed unusual poise and dexterity. The speed of attack and defense, the firmness of the stand, the withdrawal to the background position, everything took place with astounding rapidity. The fact that the two trained in different systems—Italian and French—made the contest very interesting. Juan Luna uses the Italian technique; Antonio Luna, whom we have already seen in different public contests and recently in the military school, uses the French system. We are not partial to one or the other; both are good and, in our humble opinion, a mixture of both systems might be better.

"In the Italian technique, the thrusts are made with force and the movements of the body are important. This tires the player. The French system with more firmness in the extensive attacks and in the rests is not so tiring. It is true that the changes in position and the low stab which are terrible are not found in the French system; but in the low thrusts, there is a disadvantage in the line which the foil traces. This is not straight and, therefore, not the shortest. With a straight attack and pass, we believe that there is a shorter line drawn by the foil. What we admire in the Italian system are the changes of position at every thrust of the opponent and the bend in preparation for the second thrust. These moves, executed well, produce astounding results and there is no possibility of being caught defenseless. Briefly, the Italian method is exciting, nervous, energetic, and needs agility; it tires the player. The French method on the other hand is restful, firm, secure, and does not tire the player and therefore can be used by everybody.

"We have written down these observations about the fencing techniques now prevalent because of the contest between the Luna brothers which ended successfully. It was the best item in the program. Antonio Luna and Llorente later played an exciting game. The responses of Mr. Luna were direct and rapid; his thrusts and his sallies showed his speed. Luna is a nervous player, energetic; Llorente, on the other hand, is a cold, poised and calculating player and a credit to his teacher Zuavo: he has firmness, he does not attack, he waits for the attacks, and then responds. He showed the makings of an excellent player. He is a fan of the game.

"Lete and Juan Luna also played a game. It was an excellent contest wherein Mr. Luna was able to display his Italian thrusts to advantage and his moves which were very effective. Mr. Lete of the Circulo Militar is a student who, with the equalities he has and his interest in the art, can be a good player."

The above could very well have been written by our sports writers, but their task today is made simpler because fencing bouts are not only captured on video that can produce instant, slow-motion replays but the fencers are now wired with computerized equipment that shows hits, misses and the line of a foil.

At the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution in 1896, the Luna brothers opened a fencing school in their home on Calle Alix in Sampaloc, Manila, and we have photographs of them in action, teaching their students the French and Italian styles of fencing. In the Lopez Museum, we have some watercolor drawings by Luna showing the different fencing movements.

Fencing is a thing of the past, the weapon, unlike a gun, a sign of a more polite and civilized age.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Sexuality

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I SPENT PART OF VALENTINE'S DAY CORRECTING MID-term exams, but it wasn't that bad, considering that the exams were for a Soc Sci 3 course, "Exploring Gender and Sexuality."

That's a new general education course open to all undergraduates. It was the product of almost four years of planning, involving people from different fields: the social sciences, medicine, communications. I had to shepherd the course proposal through UP's bureaucratic maze for over a year and a half, and then organize workshops, including one with Catholic and Muslim theologians, to fine-tune the course with the teaching staff.

But, some of you might be asking: Do we need a "sex course"? Aren't we already saturated with enough "sex talk" in the mass media? Sex is all around, from the idiot box at home to the towering billboards along main thoroughfares.

Yet, it is precisely because of this massive assault that I think we need something like the Soc Sci 3 course, especially when you see how, as the mass media become more sex-saturated, people seem to end up knowing less about sex.

Dangerous myths

To make my point, I thought it would be worthwhile sharing some of the stuff coming out of the exams, misconceptions that seem incongruous with this age of information. Mind you, some of the students are juniors and seniors.

There were students who still believe menstruation expels "dirty blood." One student said menstruation was there to "get rid of eggs." Another wrote that menstruation "rids the female's body of her 'old' egg cell that was not fermented."

On family planning, there were students who still cited "rhythm" as a reliable method. On the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, several said condoms don't work because they have holes through which viruses can pass.

I could say that these misconceptions are to be expected from innocent young students, but I suspect many of those myths are actually quite widely held among older adults as well, who in fact teach young people these myths. I worry because these myths can be dangerous, putting young people at risk for unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

How does Soc Sci 3 respond to these problems? As I told the students on the first class, the course is not a sex education class, at least not in the traditional sense. We've learned from the mistakes of population education classes in high school, boring classes with boring teachers (themselves often scared to death by the prospect of talking about sex) and boring visual aids that make the reproductive organs look like aliens from outer space.

We've learned, too, that the last thing we needed was a moralistic course that preached about sex as sin. The idea of menstrual blood as dirty tells us, too, about how we look at women as "dirty," even polluting (many religions still forbid menstruating women from entering religious places). I have also noticed how students and their older relatives use words like "committing" sex, which betrays a general view of sex as dangerous and sinful.

We've also been conscious about the need to drop another type of moralism that sometimes emerges with gender courses, which do exist in UP and many other Philippine universities. Although well-meaning, with the intention of raising students' consciousness about women's oppression, these courses run the risk of promoting another kind of moralism with its focus on problems such as sex trafficking and violence against women, and a tendency toward male-bashing. One teacher in Mindanao handling a gender course told me recently that she was gently chided by superiors because she had asked students to look at "sexy songs." That, they told her, was not something to be discussed in a gender course!

Beyond sex

The needs are tremendous, and we need to respond by relating sex and gender to sexuality, and how it permeates our lives. We do this by weaving the discussions about sex and sexuality into the human development cycle, from fetal life to old age. That includes talk about biomedical aspects, but in a way that helps students to understand the changes going on in their own bodies, from their libidos to pimples, from their menopausal mothers' mood swings to lolo's mellowing.

The sessions on reproductive biology inevitably bring us to family planning, and here I am amazed at the knowledge gaps. What strikes me, in particular, is the lack of awareness of natural family planning and its difference from rhythm or the calendar method. I'm realizing, too, that many young people use the calendar method to prevent pregnancies.

We talk too about psychosocial development, including reminders that sexuality comes into our lives quite early, whether we're prepared or not. During one lecture, I noticed how the class suddenly fell silent, really silent, as I talked about how we need to prevent sexual abuse of children, with a warning that the perpetrators are most often people the child already knows and trusts, including relatives. "Teach your children," I told them in no uncertain terms, "that no one, absolutely no one, has the right to touch their bodies without their permission, and that this is done only in certain contexts, like help with a bath."

Healthy and moral

The course is strong on gender, but in an applied way, bringing in culture, politics, history. We talk, for example, about how society demands female virginity, and go back in history to explain how this is tied to the way societies evolved (this is much too long for a column so I won't go into details). But after the historical review, students begin to understand why such demands are made. It's then easier to tell the students it's fine if women want to keep their virginity for their husbands, but that they should see their own worth as being more than a virgin. I do this for a very practical reason: several faculty members have noted how young girls sometimes "lose" (I explain that the term "lose" is itself loaded) their virginity to a smooth-talking boyfriend who declares his love (perhaps on Valentine's) and then think they're ruined for life. The result is that they then move from one boyfriend to another, thinking they're no longer worthy of anyone's "love" and "respect."

There's a lot of room for bringing in values and ethics, how we can be moral without being moralistic, as we challenge students to imagine a world where we can feel good, and healthy about sex and sexuality, about ourselves and about those around us, where "boy" and "girl" talk can go beyond empty bragging about being the most beautiful, the most sexy, the most appealing, the best performer.

In the end, our faculty team hopes to give young people the tools for discernment to be able to see through the sweet talk of their boyfriends or girlfriends, the glamour and glitter of media celebrities and advertising, the rhetoric of politicians and religious leaders, so they can make informed decisions about sexuality and life.

Urgent need to reorganize Philippine tourism industry

CERTAIN PERSONS CLAIMING TO speak on behalf of the tourism industry have been criticizing Senate Bill No. 2138, the Tourism Act of 2005. (PDI, 2/7/06)

It is alleged that there's no need to reorganize the tourism sector of the country. But what are the hard facts? Every single tourist brings in almost $1,000. Thailand and Malaysia receive 12 to 15 million visitors a year, generating up to $15 billion for their economies. Should we remain content with a target of 3 million arrivals and $3 billion for 2006 while we panic in paying our foreign debt and stabilizing the peso?

Even if our tourism grew by 20 percent in 2004, this is still behind Asia-Pacific's 27 percent growth rate—it is as irrelevant as our economy growing at 4 percent or 5 percent when our neighbors' are growing at 8 percent. Even with that growth, our hotels are fully booked and are charging very high prices because of intense demand.

In the last two decades, Thailand, Malaysia and other countries reorganized their tourism sectors. Today, they reap the benefits of that reorganization. Our proposals follow some of the reforms and seek to do even more. We must regulate to offer a quality of service that is globally competitive. We must have a promotions effort that is well-funded and truly makes the world know the beauty of our country. We have to develop quality tourism zones quickly so that we can accommodate more and more tourists while preserving our forests, beaches and historical sites. We need to aim for 10 million tourists in 10 years.

On these and other core reforms, there is broad consensus within the industry. All the major players in the industry, particularly those responsible for inbound tourist traffic, were invited to and participated in our committee hearings and technical working group meetings. (There were 14 such hearings and meetings conducted by the Senate tourism committee over the course of a year and a half.) To this day, they continue to work with us in refining and polishing this bill. Indeed, we brought it to the floor of the Senate precisely to emphasize its urgency and to concretize the points of debate.

I can confidently say that only a few points of contention remain. But I am more concerned with the irresponsibility of certain people who speak out against the bill, utterly ignoring all the checks and balances that are built into it.

This is the first time that a national policy for tourism is even being seriously discussed in the halls of Congress. We are 10 years behind the global boom of tourism. Now is not the time to go back to committee level, because this bill should have become law 10 years ago.

We emphasize that where tourism advances, poverty retreats. Those who seek to impede its advance do nothing to solve the problem of poverty.

—SEN. RICHARD J. GORDON,
Room 509, 5/F
Senate of the Philippines,
GSIS Bldg., Financial Center,
Pasay City

Focus anti-poverty on poorest regions

IN ADDITION TO LEW EDWARDS' proposal as to where officials of the Arroyo administration can find the poor (PDI, 1/23/06), Foodfirst Information and Action Network (Fian) Philippines is also recommending that the P35 billion anti-poverty fund that has been set aside by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo be spent in regions where there is a high incidence of poverty.

The worst-placed among these regions (out of the country's 17) are: Region 13 (Caraga), 54.2 percent; ARMM, 53.1 percent; Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula), 49.4 percent; Region 5 (Bicol), 48.4 percent; and Region 4-B (Mimaropa), 47.9 percent. (2nd Philippine Report on the Millennium Development Goals)

If the government is serious in making a difference in the lives of the poor, then it should focus on these areas. These areas might not be vote-rich or they might not have delivered big votes for GMA, but they are areas where hunger is really massive. The government should also prioritize projects that provide not only jobs but also long-term benefits to the communities. It should avoid job-generating activities that are very short-term, like street cleaning.

It can concentrate on building classrooms, dikes, irrigation canals, among other things. This will enable the people working in these projects to have money to buy food. Besides, the projects are relevant to the needs of the villages.

—RAFFY REY HIPOLITO,
policy advocacy officer,
Foodfirst Information and Action
Network (Fian) Philippines,
9-B Matulungin St.,
Barangay Central, QC

No bad news if not for GMA

THIS IS REGARDING THE LETTER of Elaine Sarmiento. (PDI, 1/31/06) It's true that there are lots of good things happening in our country today, but there are plenty of bad stories, too, for which reason we, Filipinos, should stay ever vigilant. We should thank the people who are ready to risk their lives just to keep the public informed of what the greedy and immoral politicians are doing.

She said that "her " President is trying her best amid all the political bickerings? Trying her best to do what? To stay glued to her stolen throne, that is.

Is she saying that the bishops and the likes of former Sen. Jovito Salonga and all the people asking for the truth, people deprived of their rights, are chauvinists? Let me say that all the bickerings are of her own making. There wouldn't be any if Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo hadn't suppressed the truth by barring her minions from telling the Filipino people the truth behind the Hello Garci scandal. There is no one to blame for all our troubles now other than Sarmiento's President. She is the one who started the confusion we're in now.

We Filipinos are peace-loving people. Edsa I proved this. But how can we have peace when there is no justice, when our hearts are bleeding, when our pride has been shattered, and our stomachs are burning with hunger?

Peace be with Sarmiento!

—REYNALDO TAHUM,
tahumreynaldo@yahoo.com

Yes, zero-waste mining is possible

ZERO-WASTE MINING IS EXACTLY what it connotes—mining without waste, and yes, it can be done.

Mine wastes, or mine tailings, are the leftover minerals thrown away after the sought-after metals have been retrieved from the crushed ore. These mine tailings, which in the majority of cases contain cyanide, possess a vast potential to devastate the environment. If we put to good use the mine tailings produced in mining operations, destructive mine spills will be a thing of the past.

Mine tailings are nothing but pure sand—a very valuable construction raw material. By simply adding the right amount of cement and coarse aggregates, which abound in any mining site, hundreds of pre-fabricated concrete products—from simple pavement tiles to concrete bridges—can be manufactured. The possibilities are endless, limited only by one's imagination.

Even cyanide can be recycled, or to be more technically precise, regenerated. Through a process called AVR (acidification-volatilization-regeneration), cyanide in waste water can be transformed into its gaseous state and recovered as concentrated cyanide solution, which can be used again and again in the metals-recovery process. The cost of cyanide is the single biggest expense in gold processing, and its recovery and re-use make a lot of sense for mining operators and for the environment as well.

At the end of milling operations, when cyanide solutions have to be finally discarded, the solutions must first be detoxified. Cyanide can be destroyed by treating the wastewater with small amounts of hydrogen peroxide, sulfur dioxide, ferrous sulphate or calcium hypochlorite—all very common reagents available everywhere (mercury is no longer used in large mining operations).

Zero-waste mining could cost mining operators a few hundred thousand dollars, but this cost can be more than offset by the elimination of the tailings dam, the mere construction and maintenance of which could run into millions of dollars. In addition, tailings dams are prone to accidental ruptures which could cause environmental damage of horrific proportions.

Mining does not necessarily destroy the environment. Mining can help conserve the environment by providing the government and the people the wherewithal to do so. The wealthiest nations in the world are the ones who learned to make intelligent use of their natural resources while simultaneously protecting the environment with equal vigor and determination.

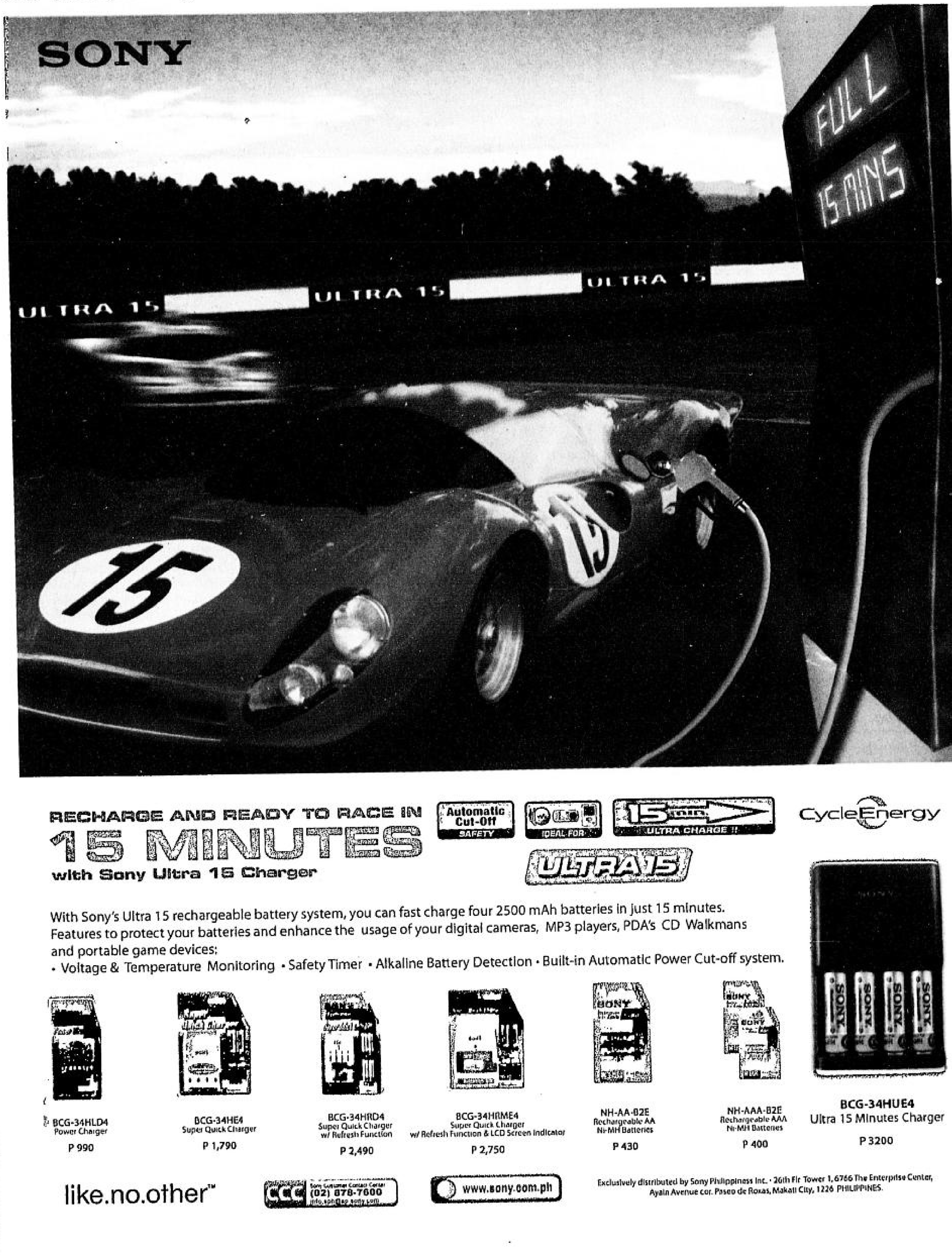
—ROD PADRIGON,
mining engineer,
rod_padrigon@yahoo.com

Politics not for Pacman

I HOPE THE POLITICIANS WILL not use the victory of Manny Pacquiao for their political ends, and I further hope that Pacquiao will not enter politics like Robert Jaworski, Freddie Webb, etc.

Politics is the science of good government. If he insists on going into politics, he must take up political science first.

—LT. COL. JULIAN MALONSO, PA (ret),
92 New York St.,
Cubao, Quezon City



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For mining but ...

I WOULD LIKE TO REACT TO THE ARTICLE "Mining Act revisited" which appeared in the Talk of the Town section. (PDI, 2/5/06)

Benjamin Philip Romualdez and Julito Sarmiento argued for the "benefits of mining" in the country. While it is true that mining uplifts economies, they are wrong in saying that the kind of mining industry we have in the Philippines will propel our economy toward progress.

We have had many mining companies in the past that advanced the same argument. But where are we now? Have we progressed? Have come up with industries that mining could have spun out? Have the minerals they extracted in Northern Luzon, specifically in Benguet, helped improve the lives of the people there?

The truth is, people in Northern Luzon continue to wallow in poverty. And those that once feasted on their resources are now gone.

I am not opposed to mining. I believe that it provides the necessary metals and minerals that we need in developing our industries. What I oppose is the fact that our country is not really benefiting from it.

First of all, the metals and minerals extracted here are brought in their raw state to the mother countries of mining companies. Secondly, mining does not really generate stable jobs. The jobs that mining generates are temporary, only good while the mining operations last.

We can only say that mining generates real employment if the industries that are supposed to spin out of mining, like automobile, jewelry, ship building, telecommunications, chemicals and the like spring up here. Are we producing automobiles here? Do we really have an airplane factory here?

The reality is, foreign mining firms serve as agents of their governments to get the minerals and resources they need for their own development and consumption. Foreign mining firms are here because they no longer have the mineral resources they need.

If they really want to help us develop, they should also build metal processing industries here.

But no, they want us to remain backward and dependent on their technologies because they want us to remain a source of profit. They take our mineral resources at very low costs, process them in their countries and then sell the finished products to us at much higher prices.

If we really want to develop and progress, let's not give our mineral resources to foreigners. What the government should do first is to support and help finance Filipino mining companies because no businessman would want our country to develop more than a countryman.

Second, support and encourage other Filipino businessmen to invest in industries that process mineral resources into finished products.

Third, help the retailers of these finished products by protecting the market against the flooding of the same products from other countries, and by vigorously campaigning to get our countrymen to buy our own products.

This way, we will achieve genuine progress and development.

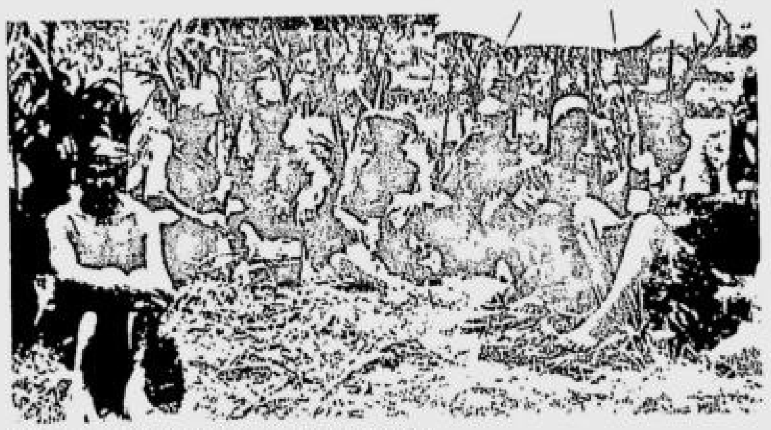
—EDMUNDO R. BACATAN,
153 Scout Rallos Ext.,
Kamuning, Quezon City

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Indigenous peoples slam bio-prospecting



"COCA-COLA Time" by Ruel Bimuyag

By Maurice Malanes
in Granada, Spain

THE GENE TECHNOLOGY, WHICH THE INDUStrialized world sees as the "wave of the future," may be something new. But for many indigenous and local peoples from five continents, who were in Granada, Spain, recently to help shape an international system on access to and benefit-sharing from biodiversity resources, it is just a new, sophisticated tool of the more powerful countries to replay old colonial ways of appropriating the resources of weaker countries.

"Through bio-prospecting, if not outright bio-piracy, proponents of the gene technology have been setting their eyes on our resources," Datu Victorino Saway of the indigenous Talaandig in Bukidnon told the INQUIRER.

"This (bio-prospecting) is all about exploiting resources as has been the case since the colonial era," he said.

Bio-prospecting is the exploration, extraction and screening of biological diversity for commercially valuable and biochemical resources such as medicines or a certain gene.

Saway was among indigenous and local folk from Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe who gathered in Granada on Jan. 30-Feb. 3 as one voice through the United Nations-accredited International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity.

They came to help intervene in the fourth meeting of the working group on access and benefit-sharing of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

INDIGENOUS/A19

Documenting disappearing rituals of the Cordillera

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

THEIR CONSTANT COMPANionship and commitment to documenting the rituals and disappearing traditions of the Cordillera have made many tribals mistake photographers Tommy Hafalla, 48, and Ruel Bimuyag, 26, as a father-and-son team.

In their two-person show "Hulin" at the Victor Oteyza Community Art Space on the top floor of La Azotea Building on Session Road in Baguio City, ongoing until Feb. 28, Hafalla and Bimuyag refer to an Ifugao ritual performed to drive away rat pestilence of rice and illnesses in the community.

When a *hulin* is performed, Hafalla said, the men of the tribe look for a narra tree in the mountains and cut off its branches to make a *bulul* or *hugo*, the highest form representing hardship. Hafalla translated a *hugo* into "pain buddy" used for healing.

At the exhibit opening on Jan. 28, a *mumbaki* (native priest) chanted in Ifugao to support the photographers in their job of documenting the Cordillera culture so that it may not be misrepresented. The photos are mostly about rituals.

Outstanding rushes

The two photographers met in Hapao, Ifugao when Hafalla was working as cameraman for Kidlat de Guia's film for Discovery Channel. De Guia's film focused on his father Kidlat Tahimik's mission of giving video workshops to residents of the province. Bimuyag was part of the workshop.

Hafalla said Bimuyag's video shots were different from the rest. His rushes and frames stood out. The older photographer learned that Bimuyag, an outdoors man, had been shooting also with a still camera and was keen on the medium.

Hafalla was just too willing to share whatever he knew with the young man who turned out to be knowledgeable about the culture not only of the Ifugao but also of the Mt. Province, Benguet and Kalinga since he has mastered playing their music. He can play the gongs and bamboo instruments like the *ungniyong*, *piw-piw*, *pakkong*, *bikkong*, *patang-og*, *tongatong* and *takitak*—all indicators of the richness of the highland culture.

'It has a soul'

Hafalla gave Bimuyag a roll of black and white film while they were attending a *begnas* (a community rice ritual) in Sagada. Bimuyag discovered that black and white had "more value. It has a soul." He was hooked.

When Bimuyag, a tourism graduate of the University of Baguio who left a stable job at a travel agency to be a full-time photographer and choreographer of cultural performances, had his first solo show, Hafalla allowed him to use his dark room. Now Bimuyag has his own.

Sometimes, they would cover the same event together like the *sidey*, a community healing in Sagada. Only selected people could attend this ritual, and the two felt honored to join the tribals in trying to appease spirits guarding the community.

Their *sidey* series took place last year when there were a lot of people being felled by strokes and one house was deliberately burned down when spirits possessed the owner.

Bimuyag's touch of wit could be seen in "Coca Cola Time" which showed tribal leaders in a moment of respite, passing a bottle of Coke Litro.

The men had just finished a 15-km walk called the *libot* within the perimeter of Sagada. At the final station, a sacrificial pig was killed, and the villagers donated food to the leaders, a social obligation called the *tambo*. Among the donated items was a bottle of Coke.

In his other photo "Rain Dance," Bimuyag showed rain pouring on the day of the *begnas*. While the men were gathered around the bonfire in the *dap-ay* (gathering place for elders), the women, holding up their umbrellas, began to dance and beat the gongs to feel warm.

Bimuyag heard a shout of blessing in the middle of the dance to mean that it was acceptable for the women to play the gongs.

LES REYES
ENTREPRENEUR
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DAY 1 (February 23, 2006/ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

PCE Recognition of Outstanding Entrepreneurship Teachers / Students / Programs by PCE • FORUM 1: Building National Confidence and Optimism To Inspire More Successful Filipino Entrepreneurs - Moderators: Rico Hizon & Anna Marie Periquet - Panelists: Socorro Ramos, Hon. Jose Concepcion III, Dr. Rolando Hortaleza, Atty. Felipe Gozon, Vivienne Tan, Henry Lim Bon Liong, Rodrigo Rivera, Marixi Prieto*, Grace Glory Go • LUNCH BREAK TOPIC: Feng Shui Master Charlie Chao's Business Outlook • FORUM 2: A Global Market Beckons The Filipino Entrepreneur - Panelists: Dennis Mendiola, Dr. Paco Sandejas, Guillermo Luchangco, Ben Colayco, Menardo Jimenez Jr. • FORUM 3: Uncommon Heroes for the Common Good - Panelists:Dr. Justin Arboleda, Francisco Colayco, Ray Gapuz Jr., Rina Lopez-Bautista*, Dylan Wilk, Gerry Geronimo* • Breeding The Entrepreneurial Mindset and Culture By Raju Mandhyan • FORUM 4: New Approaches in Entrepreneurship Education • CULMINATING FORUM: Triggering the Age of Entrepreneurship in the Philippines - Panelists:Sec. Arthur Yap, Sec. Estrella Alabastro, Chairman Carlito Puno, OIC/Secretary Fe Hidalgo, Undersecretary Zorayda Amelia Alonzo, Executive Director Gondelina Amata, Gov. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte*, Linda Wirth*, Johnlu Koa, Prof. Josephine Aguilar

DAY 2 (February 24, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Opening Ceremonies Cutting of Ribbon:VP Noli de Castro, Sen.Manuel Villar, Sen. Manuel Roxas II,Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.,Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Cong.Wilhelmino Alvarado, Mayor Rosendo Capco, Mayor Freddie Tinga, Government Officials, Partner Organizations • International Workshop on Technopreneurship - Conducted by: Prof. Patrick Chan - HOST: DOST • Business Plan Competition Brief: PCE/PESO, CFBC, ENEDA, JCI, HSBC, TIES, ONIA, GEN-P • Easy Tips on How to Start a Retail Business and How to Supply to Retailers - By: Steven T. Cua • "Elevator Pitch" Exhibition by Business Plan Contest Winners & Runners-up • Funding Options for Outstanding Business Plans • Easy on the pocket Business Ideas By: Food Cart Association of the Philippines • Awarding of PCE-ENEDA Cup Winners • GO NEGOSYO Concert with Orange and Lemons at the Central Plaza, Market! Market!

DAY 3 (February 25, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

The Franchise Boom: Now is the Time to Get Started By: Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. • International Workshop on Technopreneurship - Conducted by: Prof. Patrick Chan - HOST: DOST • Franchise Your Business An Option for Growth - By: Philippine Franchise Association • The Entrepreneur: Know Thyself - By: Lex Ledesma • Finding Your Opportunity of a Lifetime: Where do Entrepreneurs Get Their Ideas - By: Jay Bernardo • Moving Innovations to Market - By: Maoi Arroyo • The Essentials of a Successful Business Start-up - By: Joel Santos • FORUM: Financing Programs that Work - Moderator: Mau Bolante - Panelists: National Livelihood Support Fund, Personal Bank Loan providers, ABS-CBN Bayan Microfinance Foundation, Pawnshops, Cooperatives • Safeguarding and Optimizing Your Intellectual Capital - By: Intellectual Property Office

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GMA OKs P128-B Cagayan flood control

TUGUEGARAO CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has approved a 25-year master plan proposed by Cagayan Valley officials to control floods in the region.

The President, who attended a joint meeting of the Regional Development Council and the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council here on Monday, said she would agree to the proposed P270-million initial rehabilitation fund for the region, provided there were counterpart funds from local governments.

The master plan would need P128 billion to implement, according to regional officials.

Ms Arroyo also approved the 25-year reforestation program in the region's watersheds as a complementing activity for the desilting, rechanneling and dike construction in Cagayan Valley's major rivers and tributaries.

She said the Japan Bank for International Cooperation had been offering loans due to the government's prompt repayment.

"Where is the source of loan? JBIC … We have to identify the flood control program and mitigation programs … and once we put [these] in place, we have to borrow money because there is a need," she said.

Cagayan Gov. Edgar Lara said his province lost at least P1 billion in crops when it was hit by floods recently.

Agricultural losses in Isabela also reached P1 billion following floods in December last year and January this year.

"Cagayan alone [recorded] P1 billion in crop damage. Cagayan Valley has lost P2 billion worth of agricultural crops," Lara said.

He said at least six water-impounding dams should be built in Cagayan to contain floodwaters, aside from proposed dams in Nueva Vizcaya and Ilagan and Mallig towns in Isabela.

"The Cagayan River can contain only 2,000 cubic meters per second and excess water from it causes massive flooding in various towns of Cagayan and Tuguegarao City so there is a need for building water containment dams, which will also be used for irrigation," he said.

Ms Arroyo asked Gumersindo Lasam, regional director of the Department of Agriculture, to coordinate with local government officials in raising their counterpart funds for small water impounding projects and communal irrigation systems.

Tuguegarao Mayor Randolph Ting said the Magat Dam in Ramon, Isabela, and its tributaries are the main culprits in the massive flooding in this city and in low-lying villages of Cagayan.

Tobacco farms in some parts of the Ilocos region were also reported to have suffered at least P100 million in losses as a result of recent rains and typhoons.

Many Isabela towns went under water when flood recently swept the province as a result of continuous rains.

The flooding was blamed on denuded mountains and lack of environmental protection in forests. *Villamor Visaya Jr. and Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Senate, House to probe Semirara spill

By T.J. Burgonio

A PANEL OF THE SENATE AND the House of Representatives is flying to Semirara Island in Antique on Saturday to look into the extent of the damage of the massive oil spill off the coast of the island, Sen. Pia Cayetano said yesterday.

Cayetano said the panel would look deeper into reports by the University of the Philippines-Visayas and the Philippine Coast Guard that the fuel had already seeped into the island's seabed.

The panel is composed of Cayetano and Rep. Nereus Acosta (1st District, Bukidnon), co-chairs of the Congressional Oversight Committee on Clean Water, and Sen. Edgardo Angara, who filed a resolution calling for an inquiry into the spill.

Lt. Commander Joseph Coyme, PCG spokesperson, estimated that some 175,000 cubic meters of soil under the mangroves had been contaminated by the fuel that had settled under water after sitting on the surface for too long.

The size of the contaminated soil was established by Jun Ballesteros, a hazardous materials specialist from UP.

A power barge of the National Power Corp. ran aground 200 meters off the shores of Sitio Bobog, Barangay Semirara in the island on Dec. 18, causing a massive oil spill that had contaminated 112 hectares of mangrove forests.

Cayetano, who also chairs the Senate committee on environment, said the inquiry would be expanded to cover the plight of residents, particularly fishermen and shell pickers who are suffering from the spill's effects.

IN THE KNOW

WHAT LIES FOR MANGROVES?

A 2002 study on the impact of oil contamination on mangroves by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States said mangroves are highly susceptible to oil exposure.

Oil may kill them within a few weeks to several months.

Mangroves that are contaminated by oil may suffer yellowed leaves, defoliation, and tree death.

The more subtle responses include branching of *pneumatophores* (a specialized structure developed from the root in certain plants growing in swamps and marshes, serving as a respiratory organ), failure to grow or produce seeds, decreased canopy cover (the layer of leaves, twigs, and branches of trees) or increased rate of mutation, and increased sensitivity to other stresses.

Floods, rains force evacuation of 4,000 from 15 Leyte villages

By Jani Arnaiz
and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN FRANCISCO, SOUTHERN Leyte—More than 4,000 people have been living in evacuation centers here after floods spawned by non-stop rains hit 15 villages in San Francisco on Panaon Island, Southern Leyte.

Some 1,099 families or 4,612 persons started packing their bags and left their homes on Saturday when the water level started to rise.

They lived in mountain villages near the river and the rains had brought them back bad memories of the 2003 flash floods and mudslides that left 150 people dead.

San Francisco was among the three towns affected by the tragedy. The others were San Ricardo and Liloan.

The evacuees were temporarily housed in the town gym, parish center, Sangguniang Bayan session hall and schools.

The affected barangays were Santa Paz Norte, Santa Paz Sur, Tinaan, Kahayag, Jabay, Tuno, Gabi, Dakit, Punta, Bonggawisan, Sabang Ubos, Central, Marayag, Sudmon and Pinamudlan.

In Liloan, some 100 families, who were isolated for three days due to flooding, had been evacuated. Some stayed at the Liloan Central School in the town proper while others opted to say with their relatives, said Liloan Mayor Marlo Maamo.

Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias was supposed to conduct an aerial inspection and distribute additional food supplies to Panaon Island on board a helicopter from the Philippine Air Force.

The PAF based in Mactan Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu sent a helicopter to Maasin City.

But Lerias said she did not pursue the plan to conduct an aerial inspection because of the bad weather on Panaon Island.

She said that while the weather in Maasin was fair, rains continued to pour in Sogod town going to Panaon Island.

Lerias said she wanted to see the extent of damage in the provincial roads in Liloan, San Francisco, San Ricardo and Pintuyan towns, on Panaon Island.

Meanwhile, the three persons from Cebu who were earlier reported missing surfaced at the evacuation center in San Francisco on Monday night.

The three, who were working on the waterworks system of the town, were all from Villadolid in Carcar town, Cebu.

Godofredo Pansit, 50, said he and his co-workers were staying at their bunkhouse on Wednesday night in Sitio Tunggo, waiting for the rain to stop.

But the rain continued to pour, prompting his co-workers—Moises Lawas, 46, and Paulino Vasquez, 30, to decide to go to the poblacion, 7 km away.

He said he decided to keep an eye on the materials for the P13 million water works systems that his firm was constructing.

On Friday, Pansit said his two workers fetched him and wanted to take him to the town proper, so they could stay in the evacuation center.

But they got lost along the way due to the swelling of the Tunggo River. They finally made it to the town proper on Monday, or three days later.

Incessant rains also affected nine towns in Southern Leyte mainland, prompting the provincial government to place the province under a state of calamity.

Lerias said the total damage caused by the landslides and floods on crops, infrastructure and property could reach P100 million.

Forms for Cha-cha sign bid unavailable to LGUs

BINALONAN, PANGASINAN—Local officials are ready to start the campaign to gather signatures to push Charter changes but a day before the campaign starts today, they still have to receive the forms to be used in the activity, Mayor Ramon Guico said.

Guico, national president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, has proposed to the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) that it will furnish each town a copy of the form that the mayors can recopy for distribution.

He said his town has yet to receive any official form to start the signature drive.

The national government, he said, did not allot any budget for local governments to cover expenses in the gathering of signatures.

"It's *sariling sikap* (We're expected to be resourceful)," Guico said.

In an earlier interview, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said the leagues of governors and vice governors, major political parties, non-government organizations, people's organizations and religious groups could prepare their own forms.

De Venecia also said there was no need for the organizations to be accredited before they can gather signatures.

Guico, a distant cousin of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said only the question, "Do you want Charter change?" would be asked during the signature campaign.

He said the forms would not yet specify provisions in the Constitution that would be changed.

He said he was confident that he could get 50 percent of the signatures of the town's 24,000 voters. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

February 10, 2006

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS PRESENTLY IN NEED OF INTERESTED ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY OF SEVENTEEN (17) UNITS SUZUKI VEHICLE (CUSTOMIZED), FOUR (4) UNITS SUZUKI VEHICLE (MULTI CAB) AND FOUR (4) UNITS SUZUKI VEHICLE (4 WHEEL DRIVE).

You are therefore invited to submit your bids/proposals to the PBAC and participate in a sealed bidding on February 23, 2006 (Thursday), 10:00 A.M. at PELCO II Board Room San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representatives. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.

REQUEST FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SEALED BIDS/ PROPOSALS ASIDE FROM **THE BID AMOUNT, THE TERMS OF PAYMENT**. THE BID BOND IS EITHER IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TWO AND ONE HALF PERCENT (2.5%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OR SURETY BOND (W/ O.R.) EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE ALL BIDDERS ARE REQUESTED TO BE AT PELCO II BOARD ROOM AT EXACTLY 10:00 A.M. TO SECURE BID DOCUMENTS (FOR PROPER SPECIFICATION OF VEHICLES), ACCREDITATION AND FURTHER CLARIFICATION PLEASE CONTACT OR VISIT PBAC CHAIRPERSON MS. ANA LEA N. NARCISO, TEL. NO. (045) 900-0611 OR MR. NEIL S ISIP (045) 901-0864-65.

LATE SUBMISSION OF BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. THE PBAC HAS THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN THE PROPOSAL RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT SUCH MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) **ANA LEA N. NARCISO**
PBAC Chairperson

(PDI – February 14 & 15, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF CEBU
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-GOODS AND SERVICES
2nd Floor, Provincial Capitol Building, Cebu Capitol, Cebu City
Telefax No. 253-9614
E-mail Address: bac cpg@yahoo.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Goods and Services (BAC-GS), invites all interested MANPOWER SERVICE PROVIDERS to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of FIFTY-THREE (53) SECURITY GUARDS for its province-owned properties and installations covering the period from April 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006 (9 months), with an approved budget for contract of P5,587,875.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the project for bidding, and have key personnel available for the prosecution of the project. The BAG-GS shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids, Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall also be concluded.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of bid documents	February 15 to March 6, 2006
2. Pre-bid conference	February 23, 2006, 10 00 A.M.
3. Submission and opening of bids	March 7, 2006, 2:00 P.M.
4. Bid evaluation	March 9, 2006
5. Post-qualification	March 16, 2006
6. Notice of award	March 17, 2006

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of THREE THOUSAND PESOS (P3,000.00) ONLY to the Cash Receipts Division, Office of the Provincial Treasurer.

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid and, reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any defect or informality of the bid proposals received and to accept the offer it deems most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ROY G. SALUBRE
Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 16, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
Km. 5, J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Tel # 221-9400

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The *Davao City Water District*, with the *Approved Budget for 2006* intends to apply the sum of **(Pls. see Item 2)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for ***JANITORIAL SERVICES AND SECURITY SERVICES***. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening
2. The *Davao City Water District* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for:

SECURITY SERVICES in various DCWD facilities for a period of one (1) year	**ABC for one (1) year contract:** **Php: 8,187,744.00**
JANITORIAL SERVICES in various DCWD Offices for a period of one (1) year	**ABC for one (1) year contract:** **Php: 1,146,960.00**

The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Davao City Water District and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8.00 a.m. up to 5 00 p.m
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of

SECURITY SERVICES	P2,000.00/PACKAGE
JANITORIAL SERVICES	P1,500/PACKAGE

The method of payment will be on Cash Basis. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The *Davao City Water District* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on ***MARCH 09, 2006 at 9:00 o'clock A.M. for Security Services and 2:00 P.M. for Janitorial Services at DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City.***
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***MARCH 21, 2006 at 9:00 o'clock A.M. for Security Services and MARCH 21, 2006 @ 2:00 P.M. for Janitorial Services*** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash or Manager's check and in the amount of ***P81,877.00 for Security Services and P11,469.00 for Janitorial Services***. Late Bids shall not be accepted
8. Bid opening shall be at ***DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City*** on the following schedule.

SECURITY SERVICES	March 21, 2006 @ 9 00 A M.
JANITORIAL SERVICES	March 21, 2006 @ 2 00 P M.

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

9. The *Davao City Water District* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

Davao City Water District
BAC-A
J P Laurel Ave , Bajada, Davao City
221-9400 (8000)
dcwd@water gov ph
224-5392
www.davao-water.gov.ph

(Sgd) VIRGINIA S. MARIMON
BAC-A Chairperson

(PDI–Feb. 15 & 22, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
QUIRINO STATE COLLEGE
Diffun, Quirino
Telefax: (078) 694-70-56

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF TRAILER MOUNTED HYDRAULIC DRILLING MACHINE FOR DEEP WELL DRILLING (QUIRINO STATE COLLEGE)

The Quirino State College (QSC) invites all potential Bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Procurement of Trailer Mounted Hydraulic Drilling Machine for Deep Well Drilling, Quirino State College, Diffun, Quirino.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedure as specified in IRR of RA 9183 and is restricted to organizations with seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. Bidders must have a creditable tract record of ten years as a vendor of the Hydraulic Drilling Machine to various organizations (Private, Government, Government-Owned/Controlled Corporations) and meet the minimum eligibility requirements stated in the eligibility documents.

Interested bidders shall secure the eligibility documents at the Bids and Awards Committee, Julian A. Alvarez Hall, Quirino State College, Diffun, Quirino, with telefax no. (078) 694-70-60 upon presentation of Letter of Intent and current Contractor's License.

The Eligibility & Bidding Requirements and schedule of activities are as follows:

Approved Budget for the Contract: P12,600,000.00	
Issuance of Eligibility & Bidding Documents	February 16-23, 2006 at the JAAH Bldg., QSC Diffun, Quirino
Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Documents	February 28, 2006, 2:00 p.m., Office of the BAC Chair, JAAH Bldg., QSC Diffun, Quirino
Pre-Bid Conference	March 6, 2006
Submission and Opening of Bids	March 20, 2006, 9:00 a.m., QSC JAAH, Diffun, Quirino.
Cost of Bidding Documents	P2,500.00 (non-refundable)

Application for eligibility will be based on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria prescribed in the eligibility documents. Only Bidders passing the eligibility check can participate in the Pre-Bidding Conference.

QSC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ANGELINA D. AMBONON
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-Feb 15 & 22, 2006)

Court seeks custody of nursing exam results

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A REGIONAL Trial Court judge in Iloilo on Monday ordered the Professional Regulation Commission and the Board of Nursing to place the board examination papers and answer sheets of 146 West Negros College (WNC) nursing graduates in court custody.

Judge Guiljie Delfin-Lim of RTC Branch 22 acted on a motion filed by nursing graduates who sued the PRC and the nursing board for the release of their exam results.

The Iloilo sheriff is scheduled to go to Manila to get the test papers and answer sheets from the PRC office, according to Nelia Gonzales, lawyer for the WNC nursing graduates and one of the petitioners.

The judge also directed the commission and the board to furnish the petitioners a certified copy of the report of PRC Regional Director Lily Ann Baldago, who recommended that the results of the petitioners' examinations be withheld.

WNC graduate Johnny Albarico and 45 others have also filed a petition before the Court of Appeals to compel the PRC and the board to release the examination results.

Another petition, filed by 127 other WNC nursing graduates, is also pending in the sala of Bacolod RTC Judge Philadelfa Agraviador, lawyer Leon Moya said.

The court is awaiting the reply of the PRC and the board to the petition, he added.

Capiz Rep. Predenil Castro, in a privilege speech at the House of Representatives on Monday, scored Baldago for withholding the board exam results of the WNC graduates.

"It is truly lamentable to realize how the PRC, the Board of Nursing, and even the CHEd (Commission on Higher Education) become powerless as they all crouch before the vagaries of Lily Ann Baldago," he said.

The PRC and the board promised to expeditiously investigate the matter involving the withholding of the examination results of the 567 graduates of the WNC, as well as the alleged "academic overloading," but until now no results have been presented, he said.

"In the meantime, the 567 poor and unfortunate nursing graduates of West Negros College remain clueless as to their future while their and their families' lives are suspended and continue to hang on the air of uncertainty," he added.

One of the graduates comes from Aklan, three are from Antique, four from Bohol, eight from Capiz, 35 from Cebu, 28 from Dumaguete, 122 from Iloilo, 320 from Negros Occidental, and one from Southern Leyte, he said.

Castro called on Congress to investigate the case of the WNC nursing graduates.

He also urged the House to scrutinize "with its eagle eye," the budget of the PRC, the Board of Nursing, and the CHEd.

ROUNDUP

2 village officials shot dead

DAVAO CITY—Communist rebels stormed a village in New Corella, Davao del Norte and executed two village officials, the military said Thursday. Maj. Jose Ma. Cuerpo, military spokesperson for Southern Mindanao, said an undetermined number of New People's Army rebels arrived in Barangay El Salvador at about 6:30 a.m. Wednesday and seized barangay chair Loreto Cabuga, who was forced to lead the rebels to the houses of Councilors Bartolome Cabuga and Raul Juaton. The two were executed on suspicion that they were behind the organization of an anticommunist vigilante group.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 nabbed for marijuana

COTABATO CITY—Police arrested two suspected pushers on Monday while they were repacking marijuana inside a house on Pansacala Street here. Senior Insp. Samson Obatay, chief of the city police's special operations group, identified the suspects as Anwar Samparado and Solaiman Ombol, of Barangay Rosary Heights. Seized from them were five sachets of dried marijuana, drug paraphernalia and cash.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Ex-bank employee shot dead

COTABATO CITY—A former employee of a MetroBank branch here was shot dead by suspected car thieves after the victim refused to let go of his newly acquired motorcycle on Monday night, police said Tuesday. Senior Insp. Samson Obatay, chief of the city police's special operations group, said Waliasa Arsa, 32, a former Metro Bank clearing officer, was shot along Gonzalo Javier Street in Barangay Rosary Heights 7.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Laguna rural bank robbed

TANAUAN CITY—Four unidentified men ransacked a rural bank in Sta. Rosa City in Laguna on Feb. 9 and took away P500,000 in cash. Sta. Rosa police chief Supt. Florendo Saligao said the robbers, who pretended to be clients, went inside the Cabuyao Rural Bank in Barangay Balibago at 2:10 p.m. Shortly after, they announced a hold-up and disarmed the bank's lone security guard. They locked up the four bank employees and the guard inside the cash vault. The robbers escaped in a tricycle.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Artists' show in Legazpi

LEGAZPI CITY—The city government, through the Commission on Bikol History and Culture, on Monday launched a four-member show titled "Langis, Tinta at Bato" and a book launch by Bicolano writers. A one-stop shop for new books on "Bikol and/or Bikol" writers was also set up at the Legazpi City Museum at the City Hall compound. The art exhibit, which will run until March 10, features the works of four Bicolanos in celebration of National Arts month.

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

VALENTINE'S GIFT
It's a perfect Valentine's Day affair for 135 couples who wed by the beach in Hundred Islands, Alaminos City in rites officiated by the city's mayor, Hernani Braganza.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chlorine sent to flooded Surigao towns

By Bert Pacate
PDI Mindanao Bureau

TANDAG, SURIGAO DEL SUR—The provincial health office has ordered the distribution of chlorine to various town centers in the province to combat water contamination caused by recent floods.

Dr. Cesar Pagaran, provincial health officer, said some residents had fallen ill after using contaminated water.

Records from the Adela Ty Memorial Medical Center showed that at least 50 people had already been treated for gastroenteritis and other waterborne diseases since the floods hit the province last week.

"Hundreds more may have gotten sick due to contaminated waters. But we have little way of finding out. They could not go to health centers and hospitals because roads and bridges are not accessible," Pagaran said.

Gov. Vicente Pimentel Jr. asked Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. for immediate assistance.

Jobseekers lose P6M in Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—ILLEGAL RECRUITers in Mindanao collected nearly P6 million from unsuspecting victims last year, the Philippine Overseas Employment Office (POEA) in Mindanao said on Monday.

Francis Domingo, chief of the POEA-Mindanao, said the figure showed that people were still being lured by illegal recruiters to non-existent jobs abroad.

Domingo attributed the situation to the victims' failure to cooperate with the POEA.

He said illegal recruiters normally offered lucrative job placements to countries seeking Filipino workers. He did not identify the countries.

"All the efforts of the POEA to fight illegal recruitment will go to naught if Filipino overseas applicants do not cooperate," Domingo said.

On the bright side, he said, the number of victims declined last year.

In 2004, illegal recruiters collected nearly P4 million from 463 victims, he said. But last year, the number dropped to 411.

Domingo said the number of illegal recruitment cases also dropped to 136 in 2005 from 148 in 2004.

Most of the cases were settled out of court, he said.

"Also, some of the cases did not prosper because the victims were threatened," Domingo said. *Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

PUERTO PRINCESA City celebrates Valentine's Day the environmental way as Mayor Edward Hagedorn leads city residents in tree planting ceremonies held annually every Feb. 14.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Indigenous peoples ...

From page A17

Some 450 participants from governments, UN agencies, indigenous and local community groups, the academe and industry attended.

Born out of the 1992 Rio de Janiero Earth Summit in Brazil, the convention, which has 188 parties, aims "to promote the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources."

Some countries, like the Philippines, instituted in recent years some bio-prospecting agreements to help regulate bio-prospecting.

Bio-piracy

But with the lack of public information and awareness about bio-prospecting, many source communities and countries cannot effectively monitor or enforce bio-prospecting regulations, if any, leading to bio-piracy or the outright theft of biodiversity resources, said the Canada-based Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration.

The industrialized world has the edge in gene technology, but it doesn't have the raw materials, much of which still abound in developing or least developed countries.

While states are seeking to establish an international system to regulate and govern access to and equitable benefit-sharing from genetic resources, cases of bio-prospecting and bio-piracy, mostly in indigenous and local communities, continue.

Saway, for example, cited the case of government researchers in 1995 who "intruded" into the Talaandig community to gather plant specimens without getting the consent of the community.

Fortunately, says Saway, the people have a customary protocol penalizing those who encroach into the community without the permission of elders.

As punishment, the government researchers were told to provide the community with eight carabaos, 26 chickens, eight square meters each of red, white and black cloths, and P150 in coins.

"[It] was actually the Talaandig people's way of asserting their right to self-rule," Saway said.

Other indigenous peoples have presented cases of bio-piracy by pharmaceutical firms allied with universities or governments, which targeted medicinal plants, including certain animals, whose traditional uses have long been part of indigenous folk knowledge.

Indigenous and local communities from various countries have thus pushed for an international system that will guarantee respect for their rights to their territories and resources.

Igorot leader Lourdes Amos of the Thailand-based Asian Indigenous Peoples' Pact stressed on the first day of the meeting a "rights-based" system.

Reading an IIFB statement, Amos said any international system must respect and recognize indigenous peoples' "rights to self-determination and their corresponding right of permanent sovereignty over our lands and natural resources."

Amos said the right to "free and prior informed consent" and "the right to say no or deny access to our knowledge and resources" are subsumed in the indigenous peoples' right to self-determination.

MAURICE Malanes, a native of Kibungan, Benguet and PDI correspondent for Baguio-Benguet, covered the United Nations-accredited International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity held Jan. 30-Feb. 3 in Granada, Spain.

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Gov't raises La Niña alert

From page A1

Anthony Golez, deputy administrator of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), said the government was preparing the biggest flood mitigation plan that should be completed within six months. *(See related story in Across The Nation on Page A18.)*

Switch crops

The Department of Agriculture has been tasked with immediately conducting an information campaign among the country's farmers to advise them to change the type of crops they would be planting this season.

Farmers, in eastern Luzon particularly, should consider switching to crops suitable to the predicted high rainfall in the coming months.

"In the Philippines, which is also experiencing the southwest monsoon now, you have a situation where there's too much water in the wrong place at the wrong time," Yumul said.

Pagasa climatology chief Flaviana D. Hilario said the weather bureau had been monitoring anomalies in the sea surface temperatures in the Pacific since October last year.

Floods in the Visayas

From October to November last year, the Philippines experienced below normal rainfall. The cooling of the sea surface temperatures in the Pacific started in December.

From January to Feb. 12, some parts of the Philippines received 300 times more than the average rainfall, triggering flash floods and mudslides in the Visayas and Mindanao, Hilario said.

Climate centers in Australia, Japan and the United States have also observed the La Niña conditions and predicted the phenomenon would continue for the next three to six months.

For an official La Niña event to be declared, the difference between actual and normal sea surface temperatures must be at least -0.5 points for a period of five months or until May.

Pagasa recorded -0.1 points from Jan. 15 to Feb. 11.

'Hardest hit'

Pagasa said the eastern seaboard of the Philippines would be hardest hit by the La Niña phenomenon. This includes Cagayan Valley, Isabela, Southern Leyte, Leyte, Agusan del Sur and Norte, Davao Oriental, Samar, Aurora and the Bicol provinces.

The OCD has reported 14 fatalities, one injured person and six people missing due to rains this year. Around 280,000 people or 57,000 families in 24 municipalities and seven provinces have been affected.

Some 5,700 families have also been evacuated, but many of them have decided to return to their homes due to the recent fair weather. *With a report from David A. Hayes*

IN THE KNOW

LA NIÑA, LITERALLY "THE LITTLE GIRL," IS A TERM USED by meteorologists to describe unusually cool sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean. Changes in the atmospheric pressure in the Pacific, calculated by comparing air pressure between Tahiti and Darwin, Australia, are also linked to La Niña events.

Its four major effects are flooding, soil erosion, storm surges and strong winds.

It is the opposite of El Niño ("The Little Boy") which is characterized by unusually warm ocean temperatures and results in less rainfall and fewer tropical cyclones.

One of the most destructive typhoons during the La Niña phenomenon in 1998-99 was Typhoon "Norming." It struck the Visayas on Dec. 12, 1998, leaving 17 people dead, 24 missing and P247 million in damage to crops and property.

Environmental watchdog Greenpeace said the 1982-83 El Niño, considered the strongest in the 20th century, claimed some 1,500 lives and cost the world economy more than $8 billion.

The Philippines lost some $450 million. The output of agriculture, fishery and forestry dropped 6.6 percent due to drought in the first half of 1998 and strong typhoons later that year.

Floods (December 2005 to February 2006)

First week of December

- Oriental Mindoro is hit by flooding due to heavy rains. Hundreds of families are evacuated. Flooding intensifies before Christmas, displacing thousands.
- Heavy rains force over 12,000 residents from at least 14 villages in Lucena City to evacuate to safer ground as floods continue to rise.
- Four bridges in Cagayan Valley are closed due to floods; families start to leave their homes. Rivers in Isabela and La Union swell, swamping four bridges.
- Two weeks of incessant rains trigger floods in six villages in Palo town, Leyte, affecting over 8,000 persons.

Dec. 17

Typhoon "Quedan" hits southern Luzon, including Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon, and some parts of the Visayas, including Aklan, Iloilo and Capiz. Six are reported dead and thousands of families are evacuated.

Dec. 23

In Zamboanga del Norte, a farmer dies following a mudslide and flash floods due to heavy rains.

Dec. 24

Residents of six villages in Zamboanga City are evacuated after flash floods submerged their areas.

Dec. 27-29

Provinces in Northern Luzon, including Isabela, La Union and Aurora, are submerged due to heavy rains.

Jan. 25

Tropical depression "Agaton" causes floods in Isabela, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Pampanga and Nueva Vizcaya. Three are reported killed. Millions worth of crops are destroyed.

February

In Southern Leyte, seven people are killed due to a mudslide caused by heavy rains.

PDI Research

GI in Sulu in hot water for shooting stray animals

From page A1

shooting stray animals that wander into his team's compound, according to a local report.

Rice has continued to shoot at stray animals despite repeated admonitions from officials of the Philippine Marine Battalion Landing Team (MBLT) 4, the report said.

The "casualties" were not identified in the report. But in the countryside, house pets like dogs, cats, chickens and ducks usually have the run of the place.

Ironically, the visiting US troops are soon to offer veterinary services as part of their civic projects in the area.

Reached by phone in Manila, US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said that the mission was still looking into the reported animal shootings, and that "disciplinary action" would be imposed if necessary.

"US servicemen are operating under strict rules of engagement and rules of behavior, and if those rules are found to have been violated, there will be some kind of disciplinary action," Lussenhop said.

Only days earlier, the embassy said US servicemen taking part in Balikatan exercises this year were expected to behave like "informal ambassadors" of their country and to avoid any act that might "offend" Filipinos.

The conduct of visiting American troops has drawn closer scrutiny since the alleged rape of a 22-year-old Filipino woman by US Marines on Nov. 1 last year at the Subic Freeport.

Four Marines have been prevented from returning to their home base in Okinawa and are facing trial in an Olongapo City court.

Debates over US custody of the four accused and over the future of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement are going on in Congress.

On the beach

Rice was reportedly caught shooting at stray animals on Feb. 10 at around 7:45 p.m. on Seit Higad beach—where his unit had set up quarters—in Seit, Panamao, Sulu.

The soldier caused a ruckus as he "indiscriminately fired his issued firearm [at] stray animals entering their occupied compound," the report said, adding:

"It was not the first time that said shooting happened."

The report quoted members of the 24th Marine Company under the MBLT 4, which also set up quarters on the beach, as saying that "Rice himself frequently leads the shooting whenever stray animals enter the compound."

MBLT 4 officials reportedly admonished the Americans, saying that killing stray animals would "destroy the good rapport [they had] established with the residents in the area."

But Rice was "not heeding their advice," the report said.

The RP-US Balikatan exercises in Sulu are to open on Feb. 20 and run until March 5.

Civic missions

To fend off criticism that US soldiers were interfering in local operations against terrorists, the Balikatan has in recent years integrated US civic missions into the military exercises to serve the local population.

The US advance party, which includes Rice's unit, launched their "civil military operations" in Sulu on Jan. 20.

Aside from medical and dental services, "limited veterinary services" are also to be provided during medical missions.

Valentine's Day march

Meanwhile, dozens of activists held a Valentine's Day march near the US Embassy to demand the revocation of the VFA.

Holding up red heart-shaped placards reading "US out of Philippines now," the marchers said the VFA was putting American troops above Philippine laws and failing to protect the Filipinos' interests.

"What the Filipinos have with the US is clearly a parasitic and abusive relationship—a relationship between unequal entities," said marcher Corazon Requizo. *With reports from Volt Contreras and AP*

Blasted hopes, broken dreams for 14 minors

From page A1

them before a juvenile court," said Director Marcelo Ele, head of the Anti-Illegal Drugs and Special Operations Task Force.

Parents tested positive

The minors who will not be charged include those who did not test positive or were not found with drugs or drug paraphernalia, or were too young. Some were aged 7 and below. One was a 4-month-old baby whose mother had brought her child to the drug den.

That baby's mother was among six parents who tested positive for shabu, Ele said.

Police have turned 31 of the minors over to Pasig's social welfare unit. Only three of them were attending school.

The results of the drug tests on the minors shocked social workers in Pasig.

Young runners

Ele said those who did not test positive for drugs and who were not found to have drugs or any drug paraphernalia on them would be released to their nearest relative.

Ele earlier said that the youngsters were not customers but "runners" who were used to deliver drugs and other paraphernalia to the different stalls and shacks in the compound.

All in all, the raiders arrested a total of 319 people in the compound just a few hundred meters from Pasig City Hall and Pasig police headquarters.

About 200 adults facing charges are accused of offenses ranging from drug pushing, drug use, illegal possession of drugs or paraphernalia, maintenance of drug dens, visiting drug dens and illegal possession of firearms.

The eldest among the adults was a 65-year-old man.

The discovery of the colony of drug addicts has led to the sacking of two dozen police officers, including Pasig police chief Senior Supt. Raul Medina.

Pasig policemen have also been subjected to drug tests.

Social workers said an environment where peddling shabu had become a primary way to earn a living made it easier for the children to get into drugs.

Wrong values

"The values itself is lacking. They are developing the wrong attitudes," Delleva said.

Those minors who tested positive for drugs will be sent to rehabilitation centers. Those who tested negative, including a 16-year-old girl who is seven months pregnant, will be returned to their families.

But Delleva said social workers would have to check first if the relatives would be capable of raising the children.

"If the place is still detrimental for the minors, we will seek assistance from our head office for the possibility of bringing them to institutions," she said.

Declaring that President Macapagal-Arroyo "means business," Malacañang said the dismissal of 26 Philippine National Police personnel should serve as a warning to those who were not doing their jobs.

This showed the "firm resolve of the government to discipline errant cops who fail in their duty to fight crime and protect our people," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

"The President means business."

Over dzRH radio, Ms Arroyo reiterated that the government would continue to break up drug dens in Metro Manila.

Police involved?

Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio plans to order a mandatory drug testing of all City Hall employees amid suspicions that some employees and even policemen had protected the raided shabu enclave.

Eusebio said if investigation would confirm that his employees were among those rounded up, he would "quickly order that all employees in the City Hall undergo drug testing."

He also ordered the drug testing of all city policemen.

"Some barangay officials told me that they were afraid of reporting drug pushers to policemen, fearing that some of these officers could be involved in drugs as well," Eusebio said.

Medina's side

Senior Supt. Romeo Abaring has been assigned to take over the post of Medina.

"I have explained my side. I accept the decision," Medina told the INQUIRER.

Medina said his men had conducted several operations in the area, resulting in several arrests.

"The problem is many of the suspects would just post bail and quickly go back to (illegal drugs)," Medina said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Norman Bordadora*

OFW blew lid off secret 'shabu' flea market

From page A1

become unruly during a "session" in one of the 60 shanties inside the compound, and people beat him black and blue. He wanted to get even and continued to go to the place, not only to "score" but to observe, he said.

Once, he said, he saw uniformed policemen in the compound. They were apparently regulars because the other customers and merchants didn't mind them. Another time he saw a patrol car stop outside and somebody from inside handed money to its occupants.

The OFW said some of the regular customers apparently were from the moneyed class. One night, he saw luxury cars—a Mercedes Benz, a BMW and a Toyota Land Cruiser—parked outside. There were also big bikes.

Hidden camera

The OFW sought out Erwin and told him everything.

"At first, I thought he was '*praning*' (paranoid) because he was talking fast and couldn't be understood," my brother said. Wanting to get rid of the man, Erwin told him to just come back.

The OFW kept coming back. Exasperated, Erwin asked if he was willing to have a hidden camera installed on his person.

The camera was as tiny as a button, its eye as small as a needlepoint.

Bingo! When the OFW came back, he had a video of people selling shabu openly. In a second surveillance, Erwin sent his own TV crew. Again, the video showed people doing brisk business.

Erwin sought my help in approaching the authorities. He wanted his show and my own "Isumbong Mo kay Tulfo" program to have a combined coverage if any raid should take place.

The problem was who, among the police, could we trust with our "bombshell"?

Man of the hour

We went to PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao. He nearly fell off his chair when he saw the video.

"That's impossible! How can that happen in the heart of Pasig City?" he said.

Lomibao called somebody on his cellular phone and told him to come immediately. It was Director Marcelo Ele Jr., the chief of the PNP Directorate for Intelligence and Detective Management and head of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (Aidsot). He arrived in no time.

"Ask me for anything you need to complete the mission, I'll give it to you," Lomibao told Ele.

"It's a top secret mission. Only you, Mon, Erwin and I know about it at this point. If it leaks out, one of us did it."

Ele went to work. He asked if Erwin's cameraman, who was hiding the informant, could come and give him all the details about the place.

That same day, Ele and the cameraman flew over the compound, using a borrowed Air Force helicopter so people below would not suspect anything.

With the information gathered from the air and on the ground, Ele pinpointed the possible entry point and the areas where to deploy men to prevent an escape.

Shootout feared

Mapayapa compound is about a hundred meters away from the city's public market. The place teems with people.

"This will entail a big operation," Ele said in our second meeting. "Many men will be involved. A blitzkrieg. The problem is how will a big number of policemen get there without being detected?"

Ele, a two-star police intelligence man, also considered that some of the residents/drug pushers in the compound were armed and ready to fight if cornered.

Ele expected strong resistance, possibly even a shootout.

Ground assault

Erwin suggested we borrow Air Force choppers and have some crack police troops rappel down into the compound in a blitzkrieg attack. The main group would launch an assault from the ground.

Ele pondered over the suggestion, then said: "If we use choppers, our boys will have to be covered by machine-gunners from the choppers while they're rappelling down. We might hit innocent civilians."

"We will have to assault entirely by land," he said.

On Friday, about 100 PNP commandos in full battle gear assembled at the Camp Crame grandstand. They would make the assault.

Countersigns used

Aidsot personnel were also around, along with chemists from the PNP crime laboratory and police from the traffic group.

At the Aidsot office, Ele made final preparations with assault team leaders Supt. Eduardo Acierto of Aidsot and Chief Insp. Ericson Dilag of the Special Action Force.

"Let the SAF do the fighting," Ele said. "We'll take cover while the firefight is going on. We will fire back if we're fired at. This way, we won't be hitting each other."

As a countersign, all nonuniformed raiders, including our own crews, wore orange packing tape on both arms.

Handling the children

One group, composed of SAF troops, would surround the compound. The second group, the main assault body, would barge in. A third group, led by Ele and with whom we were imbedded, would go in only after the place had been "neutralized."

Also with our group were members of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency headed by retired Chief Supt. Rodolfo Caisip. There was also a team from the social welfare department to handle children caught in the compound.

No cell phones

But most of the people, including the SAF troops, didn't know what was going to take place. They were only going to be told by their commanders before they moved out of Camp Crame.

To prevent any leaks, all cellular phones of the raiders were deposited with their commanders.

To avoid detection, the 100 SAF troopers were packed like sardines into three commercial delivery vans. The nonuniformed raiders rode in a hired passenger bus. Others rode in their own cars.

It was the noon rush hour and the convoy took a long time to arrive at the compound.

On Soriano Street, where the compound was, many tricycles were lined up waiting for fares. Two vans unloaded their cargo of fully armed and sweating troops. They rushed the compound.

A third van disgorged other troops in a back street which Ele had deduced would be the escape route.

"*Dapa! Dapa!* (Hit the ground)," the SAF troops shouted as they burst in, taking people inside by surprise. Some of the troops cursed as they ordered the men to lie face down on the ground.

Women without money

The interior of the compound was a maze of shanties.

The troopers kicked open some doors and saw some women in various stages of undress. Our informant claimed women who didn't have money had sex with pushers in exchange for a fix.

The raid was over in less than five minutes.

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METRO

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Hope floats for minors in prison

By Michael Lim Ubac

DECLARING THAT "JAIL IS NO place for a child," the House committee on justice yesterday approved the comprehensive juvenile justice system bill which seeks to stop the widespread practice of integrating juvenile delinquents with hardened criminals.

If enacted, 70 percent of criminal cases against children will be dismissed outright while others will be referred to rehabilitation programs, according to the Juvenile Justice Network-Philippines (JJNP).

Data from the JJNP, a broad coalition of government and nongovernment organizations pushing for the child protection law, showed that as of September 2005, about 4,000 minors "in conflict with the law" were in jail. Of the figure, 467 were in Metro Manila jails under the supervision of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. The figure did not include those detained in police stations or under the custody of the social welfare department.

Most of them were charged with minor crimes such as petty theft, sniffing of glue or other solvents, vagrancy and violation of curfew hours.

The JJNP expects the proposed law to keep children with petty offenses out of jail, providing them with "child rights-based treatment."

Maguindanao Rep. Simeon Datumanong, the committee chair, asked the plenary to fast-track the approval of the measure since an average of 10,515 juvenile delinquents are arrested and detained annually.

"Some 28 errant youths are placed under arrest everyday who, at their very young age, have already lost their innocence to the harsh realities of life," he said.

He added that House Bill No. 5065 was a product of "painstaking efforts" to reach out to "youthful offenders who are hapless victims, too, of the cold and retributive criminal justice system."

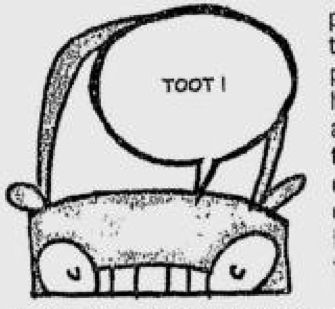
Besides being treated as "social outcasts" at a very young age, the minors were exposed to greater physical and psychological harm, including sexual abuse, he said.

Datumanong said the proposed law took into consideration the best interest of the child as "its primordial principle" consistent with the ideals of the 1987 Constitution, the international standards on relevant treaties, and human rights instruments which uphold the fundamental rights of the child.

One major feature of the proposed justice system is increasing the age bracket of those offenders exempted from criminal responsibility from 9 years old to 12 years old. However, offenders above 12 years old but below 15 years old, and those aged 15 but below 18 "shall be subjected to an appropriate intervention program."

METROBRIEFS

No blowing of horns in 'Silent Zones'



FIVE Quezon City councilors want public places like schools, churches and hospitals to be declared "Silent Zones" to stop passing motorists from blowing their horns or sirens and playing loud music. In a proposed ordinance, the councilors said the noise made by cars and other vehicles could be a distraction. A "peaceful and quiet environment" is conducive to teaching in school, worshipping in church, and treating patients in a hospital, they added. Under the proposal, first time violators shall be fined P1,000 or imprisoned for a month. Subsequent offenders shall be fined P3,000 or imprisoned for six months, or both, depending on the discretion of the court. The proposed ordinance was introduced by Councilors Resty Malangen, Rommel Abesamis, Eric Rey Medina, Francisco Calalay Jr. and Janet Malaya.

DJ Yap

Accidental shooting, suicide or foul play?

A POLICEMAN died after he was shot in the chest inside a hotel in Makati City yesterday. PO1 Al Francis Quirante Camba, 26, was rushed to the Makati Medical Center at 1:15 a.m. after a bullet pierced the right side of his collar bone. The shooting took place in Unit 1416 of the Prince Plaza, a condominium-hotel at the corner of Dela Rosa and Legaspi Streets in Barangay San Lorenzo, where Camba had spent the night drinking with his friends. The policeman, assigned to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in Cotabato City, was in Metro Manila to undergo training at the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame. The Makati Police Department's Homicide Section is now considering three possibilities in Camba's death: Accidental shooting, suicide, or foul play. Senior Insp. Ma. Jasmelina Almasa, Southern Police District Scene-of-the-Crime Operatives team leader, said Camba's companions would undergo testing to determine if they had fired a gun.

Tarra V. Quismundo

Manila cops shape up

BYE BYE TYAN!

MANILA policemen have no more excuse for being fat and out of shape. The Manila Police District (MPD) yesterday began its kickboxing and tummy trimming sessions as part of an improved fitness program for all law enforcers and civilian employees. MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said the program was aimed at getting all the district's personnel in shape so that they could run after criminals. "The MPD's fitness program is not only good for physical health but also essential in instilling professionalism, integrity and discipline," Bulaong said in a statement. "We believe that this fitness program could be considered as a key to crime suppression because it would eventually create a new breed of cops with increased strength and vigor," Bulaong added. The MPD had earlier signed a memorandum of agreement with the Philippine Council for Strength and Fitness Inc. (PCSF) to draft and initiate a fitness program suited for Manila policemen. PCSF officials earlier explained that the Manila policemen would be required to undergo *Arnis* self-defense training, weight training, police obstacle course activities, physical ability tests, fighting fitness for female members of the Special Weapons and Tactics team, bodybuilding, and a 12-week "extensive tummy trimming weight reduction system."

Margaux C. Ortiz

Fiery Valentine's Day

A FIRE hit a church in Las Piñas City yesterday, destroying P1-million worth of property. According to deputy fire marshal Aldwin Salazar, the fire began shortly after 10 a.m. in the caretaker's quarters beside the Las Piñas Evangelical Church on Daisy Street in Pilar Village, Barangay Talon Dos. "The caretaker's son, who was the only one left in the house, immediately ran outside when the blaze started," Salazar said, relating witnesses' accounts. Fire investigators have yet to determine the cause of the fire which later spread to the church, but said it might be electricity-related. The blaze was put out at 11:45 a.m., but not before it burned down the church altar and some musical instruments. No one was hurt or killed in the incident.

Jocelyn R. Uy

2 hurt in Pasig accident

TWO persons were injured when the debris from a concrete wall fell on them in Pasig City yesterday. Erlinda Florendo, 42, and construction worker Rolly Lubrette, 26, sustained wounds in their arms and knees. But another construction worker police identified as a certain Ricardo, was believed to still be under the rubble, as rescuers continued digging through the debris, as of press time. The six-meter wall attached to at least two houses at 195 Diaz Street in Barangay Pineda, leaned forward and almost collapsed at about 3:30 p.m. The excavation ran parallel to the ground where the concrete wall, attached to the houses of Nicanor Afable and Florendo's father-in-law Eduviges, was standing. The excavation, ongoing for more than two weeks, was one-meter deep and less than a meter wide, PO3 Arman Valenzuela also said. Councilor Bobby Eusebio, who rushed to the area, said the old pipes were being replaced with new concrete pipes to improve the drainage system.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

St. Theresa's College-Manila homecoming

THE St. Theresa's College, Manila (STCM) homecoming will be held this Saturday, Feb. 18, at Pavilions A & B of the Wack-Wack Golf & Country Club in Mandaluyong City. Host class is Pearl jubilarian HS '76. The oldest class is Double Platinum HS '31, to which the composer of the school song, Aurea Carballo-Gonzalez, a.k.a. author Freda Jayme, belongs. For the first time, there won't be a silver jubilarian class, as the last batch to graduate, HS '80, marked the milestone last year. To be announced during the homecoming program is the opening in June of the Mother Redempta Pre-School, run by the STCM Foundation. There will also be an update on the Mother Redempta Fund, the service arm of the alumnae association. The homecoming starts at 3 p.m. For inquiries, call 740-1810.

No more Fridays with Dr. Alfredo

By DJ Yap

THE PAST FRIDAYS HAVE BEEN QUIET AT the San Agustin Clinic in Quezon City.

There are no crowds waiting in line to get free medical attention for their ailments. Gone too is the good doctor who used to spend the whole day treating the poor and needy.

Dr. Alfredo San Agustin, who dedicated his Fridays for the past 40 years attending to the medical needs of the disadvantaged, passed away last Jan. 16 at the age of 74.

San Agustin, who succumbed to liver cancer, was cited as Quezon City's Most Outstanding Citizen in the field of medicine in 2004 for his commitment to serving the poor both as a doctor and citizen.

But while San Agustin may be gone, his mission will continue.

Gina San Agustin and Dr. Tess San Agustin-Rusch have decided to carry on their father's charity clinic also called "Thank God, It's Friday."

"We will continue his legacy," said Tess. "We have to look forward to the future."

On Friday, the clinic will once again open its doors to the poor for a medical mission from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 5-C Kamuning Road.

Operations at the Friday clinic were suspended early this year when San Agustin died. But his daughters have vowed to pay tribute to his kindness and generosity by continuing what he had begun.

"I was 4 years old when my Dad took me to a remote area in Quezon City, with a big box of medicine on his right shoulder and his other hand holding me," Gina recalled.

"Even when my Dad was all alone treating sick people, it was already a medical mission," she added. "We will take it from there."

San Agustin was laid to rest on Jan. 26. His family, friends and the people he had treated gave him a warm sendoff with prayers and a tribute.

Friday's medical mission will be conducted in cooperation with Solvay, a pharmaceutical company that will provide needed medical equipment, such as an electrocardiogram machine.

Dr. Ernie Capulong, a longtime family friend, and Dr. Marc Dy, a young physician, will also help provide medical care for the patients.

Bagatsing; 89

FORMER MANILA MAYOR RAMON D. Bagatsing died at 5:30 a.m. yesterday in his house at Alabang Hills, Muntinlupa. He was 89.

BAGATSING

Bagatsing is survived by his wife, Juanita Hubria Sevilla, and children Rica, former Congressmen Amado and Ramon Jr., Jesus, Manuel, Eduardo and Valentino.

Born on Aug. 19, 1916, in Fabrica, Sagay, Negros Occidental, Bagatsing led a colorful life as a Manila policeman, soldier and politician. He started his public career as a patrolman in the Manila Police Department from 1939 to 1941.

When World War II broke out in 1941, he enlisted in the US Armed Forces in the Far East to fight Japanese invasion forces. From 1957 to 1965, he served in Congress as the representative of Manila's third district. His term was interrupted when he joined the Cabinet as chief of the Presidential Agency on Reforms and Government Operations from 1967 to 1969. He ran again for his old seat in Congress, and was elected for a third term in 1969.

Bagatsing also served as mayor of Manila from 1971 to 1986. He survived the bloody Plaza Miranda bombing incident in 1971.

Bagatsing passed the bar in 1949 and obtained a Master of Laws degree from the University of Sto. Tomas in 1970. The former mayor was also chairman of the Manila Red Cross chapter and member of its board of directors, past national president of the Philippine Jaycees, Lions Club district director and international director.

He was the founder and benefactor of the Ramon D. Bagatsing Scholarship Foundation, Inc. which has given away more than 1,300 grants to poor and deserving students.

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"HOUSEMATES" Nene Tamayo and Bob de la Cruz, of a popular reality TV show, led a rally yesterday to call for the closure of the Payatas dump in Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC

Metro garbage fate still hangs

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

RODRIGUEZ (RIZAL) MAYOR PEDRO CUERPO is not only prepared to accept more garbage from the metropolis, he is also looking forward to seeing the Payatas dump in Quezon City formally closed.

He said the dump, which is supposed to close this week as provided for in the Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, is situated at the boundary of Quezon City and Rodriguez (formerly Montalban), has turned the entry point to his town into an eyesore. "Who would want to invest in our town when we have a dump at our entry point?" Cuerpo said.

The Payatas dump and the controlled dump in Navotas, which have been accepting trash from a few areas in Metro Manila, are set to close tomorrow as mandated by law.

But Cuerpo said there was no reason to worry because the 14-hectare Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility, a sanitary landfill not affected by the law, was ready for more trash.

In open dumps, piles of garbage are just dumped in an area without being treated, unlike sanitary landfills where a filter prevents leachate from seeping into the water table, soil layers are dumped to cover every layer of trash and there are waste water treatment facilities.

Cuerpo said they were also planning to expand the facility, should there be a need for it. He said at least 60 hectares of land were still available in the area to accommodate more trash. The facility serves at least 10 of the 17 towns and cities in Metro Manila.

But environmental groups, like Bangon Kalikasan Movement, had long been against the facility, which is situated near a creek and accepts mixed instead of segregated trash.

"Mayor Cuerpo may be ready to accept more garbage but the environment and the people of Rodriguez are greatly affected from the destruction caused by the dump," added Dr. Pastor Cruz of the Montalban Environmental Protection Council.

The town used to be the watershed for Metro Manila and adjoining provinces north and south. Today, its once lush and green slopes are now denuded, there is wanton quarrying plus the threat of tons of garbage being dumped in the area, said Kalikasan's Joey Papa.

With the deadline for the closure of 262 controlled dumps and 734 more open dumps fast approaching, some authorities are saying that only sanitary landfills will now be allowed under the law to accept waste, added Papa.

"The real alternative, the environment friendly and sustainable solution, which is ecological waste and resource management, is being disregarded," he said, adding that these so-called "sanitary" landfills are just dumps with "token" provisions on safeguards.

Cruz said a former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources reportedly granted the Rodriguez dump a "midnight" environment clearance certificate as a "sanitary landfill" in 2004 after it started operating much earlier in 2002.

But according to experts, including the US Environmental Protection Agency, there is no such thing as a "sanitary" landfill, said Papa. "Protective" liners installed against landfill walls can easily be destroyed by ordinary household items like vinegar or cleansing agents thrown into the landfill, he added.

Gate issue resurfaces at BF Homes

By Jocelyn R. Uy

RESIDENTS OF BF HOMES PARAÑAQUE ARE blaming the city government for the growing number of crime incidents inside the subdivision.

The United BF Homeowners Association Inc. (UBFHAI) had opposed the turnover of control of the subdivision's main gates to the city government last September, saying it would expose the roughly 10,000 homeowners to criminals who can now freely enter the area.

"The crime rate has surged, especially carnapping and molestation cases, since the local government opened it (gates) up," UBFHAI president Celso Reyes said in a phone interview.

BF Homes Parañaque, which extends to the cities of Las Piñas and Muntinlupa, is the biggest subdivision in the country. It also has 46 schools, including the Southville International School.

For the past two months, the UBFHAI has already recorded seven cases of car theft. The latest incident happened last Sunday, in which a 19-year-old boy, Richard Capili, a student of Southville, was shot dead by car thieves right inside the subdivision.

Reyes said that on the same day, thieves also broke into three cars parked inside the subdivision.

A homeowner, who requested anonymity for security reasons, said that since the main gates were opened to the public, cases of *akyat-bahay* and cellphone snatching have became rampant.

"But this is the first time that somebody died," the homeowner said.

"It would have not happened if our security was intact. Before, we had about 70 security people, but they (local government) took them away," Reyes told the INQUIRER.

He claimed that only six policemen had been detailed to the subdivision.

However, Parañaque City police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles said that Sunday's carjacking incident had no bearing on the opening of two of the subvidision's main roads—El Grande and Aguirre Avenues—to the public.

"The incident did not happen on those streets. The incident took place 200 meters away from the main gates," Estilles told the INQUIRER.

He also refuted Reyes' claim, saying there are about 35 policemen who keep watch over the subdivision. Security was augmented in the subdivision with the launching last December of 12 bike patrols, he added.

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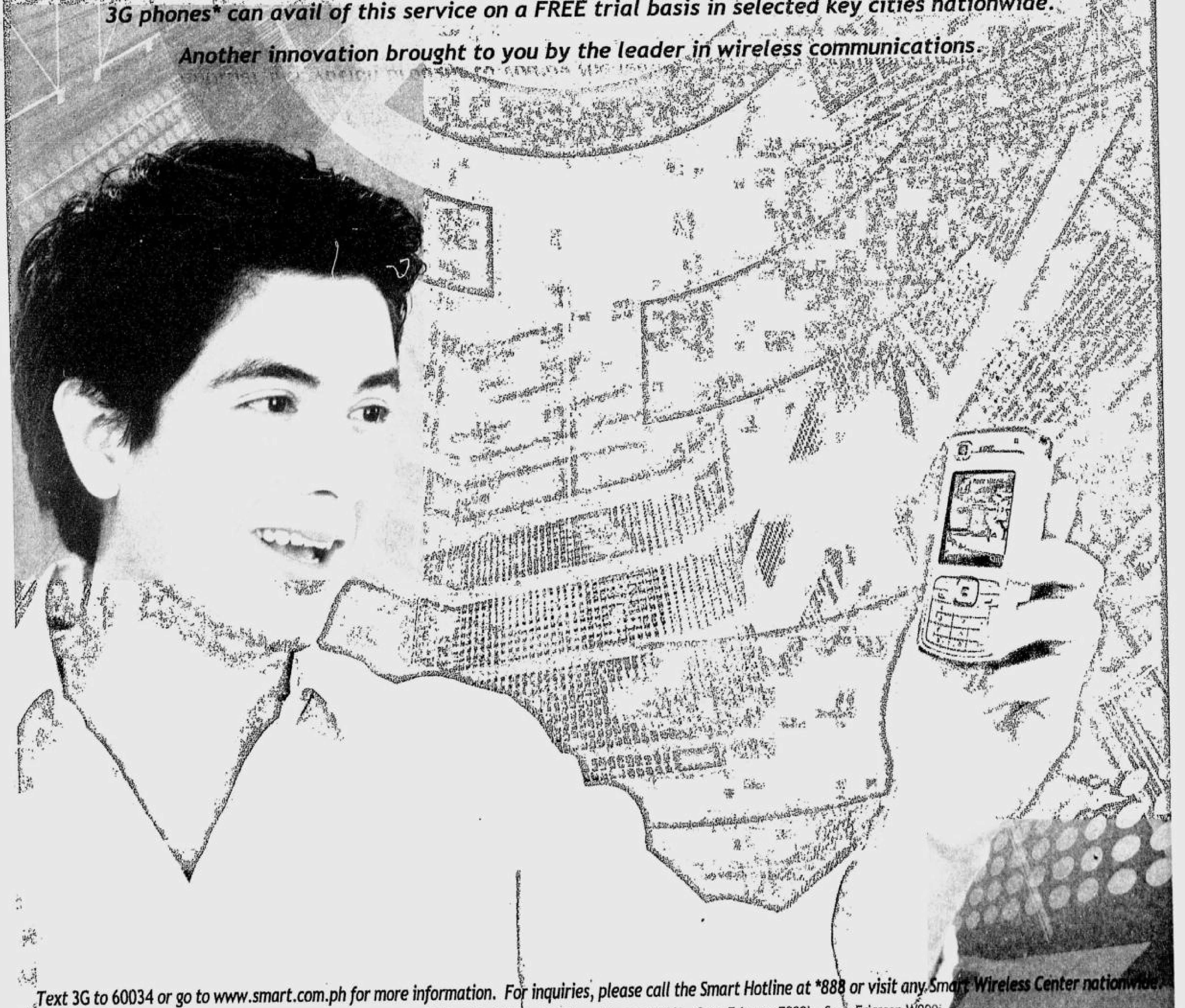

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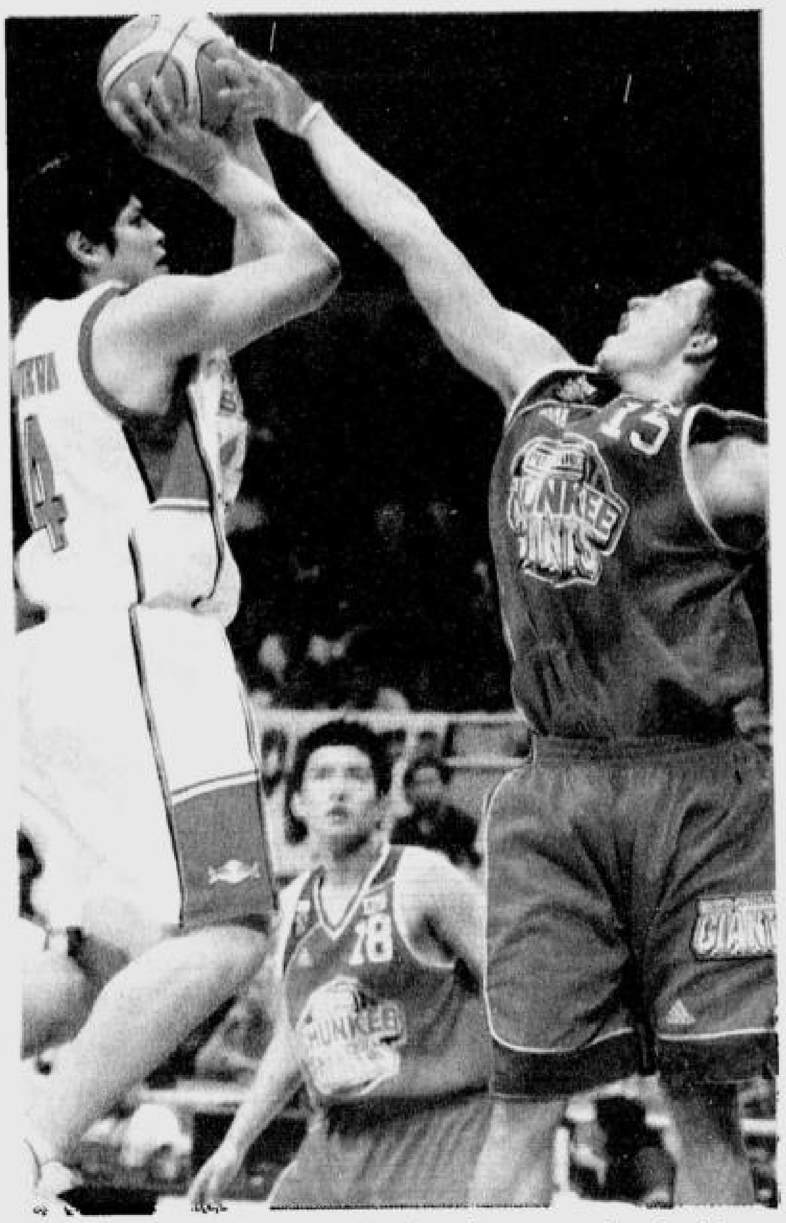

RED Bull's Enrico Villanueva unleashes a jumper over Purefoods' Marc Pingris in Game 3 of the PBA Finals. EDWIN BACASMAS

Giants seek equalizer versus wounded Bulls

By June Navarro

IT'S RED BULL'S TURN TO make the adjustments.

"Some things are going to work for them after several games," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao Friday after Purefoods had sliced the Bulls' lead to 2-1 in the best-of-seven San Mig Coffee PBA Fiesta Conference title series with a 103-97 win.

"It's a good thing we're still in the lead because the next adjustment is ours to make."

Guiao and his wounded Bulls try to extend that lead at 6:45 tonight at the Araneta Coliseum, ready to deflate the Giants' new-found confidence and a full-court press that caught them off guard three nights ago.

"They (Giants) tried to press us, but I don't think that's the problem," Guiao said. "We will find a solution to that press, but the main problem is the [players'] energy lost."

Enrico Villanueva, the leading contender for the Best Player of the Conference award, Larry Fonacier and James Penny, like the others in the Bulls offensive rotation, looked fagged out trying to make it 3-0 Sunday night.

Giving the Bulls a dose of their own medicine, the Giants worked behind a surprisingly solid full-court press to grab the momentum early in the second quarter, then built on it a cushion Red Bull never overhauled.

GAME TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
6:45 p.m.—Red Bull Barako vs Purefoods
Game 1—Red Bull d. Purefoods, 107-102 (OT)
Game 2—Red Bull d. Purefoods, 98-84
Game 3—Purefoods d. Red Bull, 103-97

James Yap, Jondan Salvador, Kerby Raymundo and Noy Castillo shone offensively, and the Giants held together even after import Marquin Chandler took to the showers with still four minutes left because of fouls.

"We've now proven to everybody that we're not a Marquin Chandler team," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

Incidentally, Chandler was fined another P9,200 by the Commissioner's Office for committing a technical foul in Game 3 off Larry Fonacier. Chandler's sixth technical for the tournament raised his total fines to P22,200.

Point guard Paul Artadi, seldom used after coach Ryan Gregorio began starting Roger Yap regularly, was also a decisive factor for breaking Red Bull's smothering press.

"It's going to be rugged and physical but we're not going to back down," said Gregorio. "We just brought back the old formula that gave us several wins at the start."

A victory for the Giants will prolong the series. And it could work in favor of the Bulls following their semifinal series against Barangay Ginebra that went the distance.

"If we can get the next game, we can put up distance between us," said Guiao. "Otherwise, it will turn out to be a long series.

"Even so, I still feel good about my team because we can use the bench in a long series. We can use it a lot more than they can."

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Painters ready for showdown sans Tangkay

GAME TOMORROW (*San Andres Gym*)
3 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia (Game 5 Finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

CONTRARY TO PERCEPTION, RAIN OR SHINE coach Caloy Garcia believes the absence of Most Valuable Player Jojo Tangkay can turn the Painters' fortune around.

"I think it's an advantage because now everybody will step up and quit relying on him," said Garcia, whose Painters blew a 2-0 lead in the title series.

Tangkay will be missing the winner-take-all Game 5 of the PBL Heroes Cup finals after the league suspended him for committing his second unsportsmanlike foul.

Even if the Commissioner's Office turned down Tangkay's appeal yesterday, Garcia thinks the Painters have enough offensive options versus the Magnolia Wizards.

The youthful mentor cited young gunners Erwin Sta. Maria, Paolo Orbeta and Yousif Aljamal to fill in the void left by the league's top scorer.

"I've talked to them and they committed that they will step up hard on Thursday," noted Garcia.

Tangkay himself believes that the Painters remain capable of clinching their second straight crown and seventh overall title since joining the league in 1998.

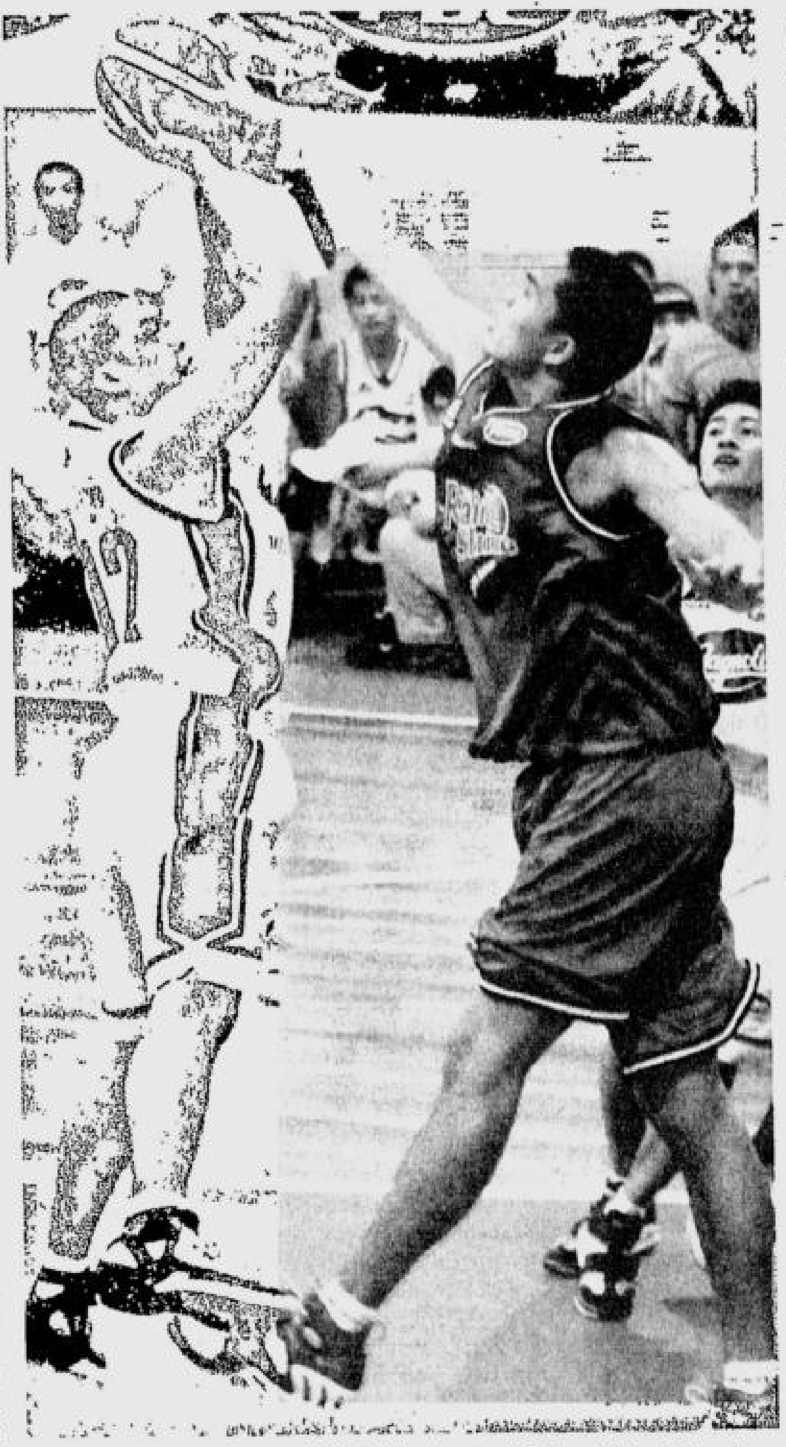
Tangkay, who bagged his first MVP plum last week, punched Magnolia star Arwind Santos on the nose in Game 4 last Sunday.

In Game 3, Tangkay was also slapped with an unsportsmanlike foul after hitting Santos on the face.

The Painters seemed headed for a title sweep after winning Game 1 (70-68 in overtime) and Game 2 (75-73) of the best-of-five series. But the Wizards forged a do-or-die showdown by claiming Game 3 (80-70) and Game 4 (61-57 in overtime).

Cordero keeps top post

THE PHILIPPINE STAR'S ABAC CORDERO RETAINED his post as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee-Philippine Sports Commission Media Group via acclamation during elections over the weekend at the group's headquarters at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (RMSC). Cordero is now on his third term as president of the Media Group, which is made up of 40 members from various newspapers covering the RMSC beat. Also retained via acclamation were Mae Ochoa of Pilipino Star Ngayon, vice president for internal affairs; Waylon Galvez of People's Journal, vice president for external affairs; Nick Giongco of the Manila Bulletin, treasurer; and Marc Anthony Reyes of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, auditor. Zeny Dadacay of the Business Mirror was elected secretary, while Manila Bulletin's Eddie Alinea and Manila Times' Frank Calapre kept their respective posts as senior adviser and membership committee chair. Named to the board were Musong Castillo of the INQUIRER, Russel Cadayona of Pang Masa, Girlie Turno of Balita, Lito Oredo of Bandera and Mike Lee of Tumbok.



MAGNOLIA power forward Mark Isip shoots off Rain or Shine's Marvin Ortiguerra and Jay-R Reyes in Game 4 of the series. EDWIN BACASMAS

San Beda, St. Benilde booters dispute title

DEFENDING CHAMPION SAN BEDA GUNS for its fourth straight title today when it meets rival College of St. Benilde in the men's football finals of the 81st National Collegiate Athletic Assocaition at the ASCom Football Field in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

The Red Lions finished with the best 2-0-1 (win-loss-draw) record at the end of the first round for seven points, while the Blazers swept the second round with a 3-0-0 card worth nine points to arrange the title showdown.

Gametime is 10:30 a.m.

The Taft-based St. Benilde squad is gunning for its first football crown since joining the country's oldest collegiate league in 1998.

The Red Lions and the Blazers split their elimination round meeting, with the former drawing first blood with a 2-1 win on Jan. 30. The Blazers took the second, 1-0, courtesy of striker Mark Ed Lusung's goal in extra time on Feb. 8.

The Mapua Cardinals and the Philippine Christian U Dolphins finished third and fourth, respectively.

In the juniors division, La Salle Green Hills tries to move closer to sweeping the elimination phase and a fourth straight title as it meets Philippine Christian U at 8:30 a.m. La Salle will face the SBC Red Cubs for its final elimination game on Sunday.

Moto Masters draws bets from 12 nations

RIDERS FROM THE PHILIPPINES AND 11 OTHER countries see action in the 2006 Motocross Masters of Asia set March 16-19 at the Puerto Princesa City motocross racetrack.

China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Japan, Guam, Saipan, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines will be represented in the event.

The event will be held in Puerto Princesa for the third straight year and it is expected to top attendance of the past two editions where more than 70,000 showed up to watch.

Defending champion Glenn Aguilar banners the crack Filipino team, which will have the benefit of tune-up races starting with the Namssa Camel International Supercross championships in Bacolod this weekend.

Round 2 will be held in Iloilo from March 2-5.

The event is being organized by the Namssa and supported by the City of Puerto Princesa, the Philippine Sports Commission, motorcyclephilippines.com and Inside Racing magazine.

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PAL Interclub gets backing

DAVAO CITY—THIS YEAR'S PHILIPPINE AIRlines Interclub, the country's oldest golf championship that had its beginnings in 1948, has garnered big corporate support once again.

Tournament chair Domingo T. Duerme said that the 59th Men's Regular Interclub and the 19th Seniors Interclub have attracted 14 major sponsors and nine other backers, attesting to the prestige and drawing power of the event widely acknowledged as the national clubs championship.

Action Asia, Airbus, Boeing, GE Aviation, GMA 7, Honda Cars Davao, INQ7.net, Joey 92.3, Royal Caribbean International, Pagcor, People Asia, Premier Wine & Spirits, Rudy Project and UMBN are the major sponsors.

The corporate sponsors are ABS-CBN International, Fortune Tobacco and Radio Mindanao Network while 96.3 WRock, Asia Brewery, Century Park Hotel, Honda Megamotors, SM City Davao and Tanduay Rhum are minor sponsors.

The Seniors Interclub, a side event for players 55 years old and above, gets going from Feb. 17-19 at the Apo and Lanang golf courses while the Men's Regular event follows from Feb. 22-25 at Apo and Rancho Palos Verdes.

This year's competition has lured a cast of 71 teams for the Men's Regular and 73 for the seniors events. Of these, 54 clubs are from overseas, including the United States, Australia, Japan, Canada and Saudi Arabia.

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BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

(ADVICE FROM AGIMAT: Countless other voices will be whispering in Manny Pacquiao's ears how to next deal with Erik Morales. It would, however, be wise to heed these words of a grizzled boxing aficionado: "*Huwag*, don't fall into the trap," says former senator Ramon Revilla, who also swears Pacquiao would be at a great disadvantage if he agrees to square off with Morales at 132 lb, the new limit being dangled by promoters headed by Bob Arum of Top Rank. In the first place, Revilla explains, the new weight was not stipulated in the rematch clause. Revilla says Morales is just desperate to avenge, at all costs, the shameful beating he had suffered against Pacquiao.)

***

HERE'S A BIG POST-VALENTINE'S THANKS to the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) for acknowledging the offer by the League of Provinces of the Philippines to lend them the noted Cuban boxing coach under their hire.

Your reporter here had been tasked by Gov. Manny Piñol of North Cotabato to inform the Abap about the availability of Señor Honorato Espinosa, who won for his country its first Olympic gold in the 1972 Munich Olympics, to help prepare the RP national boxing team for the Doha Asian Games this year.

Piñol offered assistance after Raul Fernandez Liranza, the Cuban coach the Abap had been trying to rehire, failed anew to materialize at the airport.

***

Thank you, the Abap told Piñol, but they have other Cuban coaches in mind.

In a talk with our colleague Ed Picson, the no-nonsense sportscaster, Abap president Manny Lopez was quoted as saying he would rather stick it out with his Filipino staff than try his luck with Espinosa.

The outright refusal was based on what the Abap chief described as Espinosa's lack of qualities (to coach the RP team), as quoted by Picson in his column for the Manila Bulletin yesterday.

Said the Abap in a statement: "While we appreciate the comments and recommendations of people regarding who to hire as coach of the RP team, technically, the person that they are recommending does not fit our standards at present."

***

That statement, by the way, should also goad the Abap to new heights.

At least, they now appear certain on what should be done to regain winning form and to resume the hunt for the first Olympic boxing gold for the country.

A joyful hump, indeed, because, after another debacle in the last Athens Olympics, the same Abap group cried and claimed they did not know how and why they had failed.

Well, if they did not know the reason behind the perennial failure, how in the world would they be able to finally win?

That said, it goes without saying that Abap's newfound formula includes shunning, skipping and disregarding the likes of Honorato Espinosa who, by the way, had also landed a total of 27 gold medals from international tournaments for Cuba.

***

Now, this is not an effort to flog a dead horse, as the cliché goes.

But we find it our duty to assure that Señor Espinosa, old as he may be, also happens to be a main cog who works as deputy to the great Dr. Alcides Sagara, revered as the architect of Cuba's magnificent national boxing program.

Espinosa, if we are to believe what we saw in Havana last year, was the keeper of the key, one reason he was personally recommended to help in the Philippines by Cuban Ambassador Jorge Rey Jimenez.

Espinosa, we were told, will start moving around the country starting next month to spread the gospel of sound Olympic boxing, under the auspices of the League of Governors.

***

Now, the best we can do is again wish Manny Lopez and his staff the best of luck in their forthcoming quest for glory.

Of course, we have to take exception to what Lopez had mentioned that "Espinosa had failed to produce, in four years as coach of the Cambodian boxing program, a single gold medal, not even in the SEA Games."

We won't call that basis behind the rejection by the Abap of Espinosa hysterical.

But, hey, Cambodia winning a boxing gold could be equal to having Garci or anyone in the Comelec hierarchy receive a Papal award for honesty.

At least, it cannot be said that the Cuban maestro did not dare try the impossible.

New group can call itself BAP—Peping

But POC puts its foot down on old set of officers

By Musong R. Castillo

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday said he is open to the idea of the new cage body calling itself the Basketball Association of the Philippines, the old group stricken off the the Olympic body's roster last year.

But he said the new basketball association shouldn't go beyond the use of the old BAP's name.

Cojuangco also said that only Joey Lina, president of the expelled BAP, and none other from the group's previous set of officers should be included in the "new BAP," which the country's major basketball stakeholders are trying to form.

"How do you get rid of those responsible for the failure of basketball [in the country]," Cojuangco said during yesterday's PSA Forum at the Pantalan restaurant in Manila.

"It must be emptied [of the old set of officers]. Because if we put the same members [in the new BAP], then it is just the same as the old one. The problem will still be there."

Under a memorandum of understanding signed by the POC and the international basketball federation (Fiba) last year, Lina and the Philippine Basketball Association, Philippine Basketball League, the UAAP and the NCAA are called upon to form the new local caging group that will replace the old BAP.

They have until the end of March to come up with the structure of the new organization, which will then bat for reaffiliation with the Fiba.

COJUANGCO: No to old BAP hands

LINA: Amenable to POC head

The Fiba will lift the country's suspension from all international tournaments once it officially readmits the new cage body.

Basketball competitions in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games last year were shelved because the Fiba wouldn't lift the suspension. The sanction also imperils the Philippines' participation in the Doha Asian Games in December.

Meanwhile, the POC is looking at a "minimum of 50 and a maximum of 100 athletes" to carry the fight for the country in the Asiad in Qatar, Cojuangco also announced.

He said the chosen athletes will be sent overseas for training.

"About a hundred athletes, if trained for six months abroad, under good tutelage and proper handling, will produce winners in the Asian Games," said Cojuangco during the session sponsored by Pagcor and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Cojuangco said the Doha-bound athletes who bagged gold medals in the recent Southeast Asian Games have the inside track on the Asiad slots.

"That will be the easiest way, unless the NSAs have some fresh talents coming in," he said.

RP's Sanchez shares lead in tough Cannes chess tilt

SANCHEZ

FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL Master Joseph Sanchez deftly handled the black pieces to down Hong Kong whiz kid Woman Grandmaster Anya Korke in the second round Monday and share the lead in the 20th Cannes Chess Festival at the Palais Festival Hall in Cannes, France.

The win gave the Cebuano, long-time trainer of top-ranked Filipino GM Mark Paragua, a perfect 2.0 points, the same output of top seed Super GM Igor Miladinovic of Serbia and Montenegro and 17 others in the 125-man field.

The Paris-based Sanchez, who clobbered local star Peter Vas in the opening round, will meet English GM Daniel King with the white pieces in the third round.

Two other Filipinos, IM Jayson Gonzales and GM Nelson Mariano II, are also in strong contention with 1.5 points each.

Gonzales, aiming for his third and final GM result in the Fide 9-round Swiss system tournament, settled for a draw with Flavio Perez of France while Mariano subdued Achim Gunter Hoffmann of Germany.

In the third round, Gonzales tackles David Lemeaux while Mariano faces Christian Lecuyer.

Other 2.0 pointers were GM Sergey Fedorchuk (2590, Ukraine), GM Daniel King (2526, England), GM Mikheil Kekelidze (2516, Georgia), GM Miroljub Lazic (2466, Serbia and Montenegro), GM Spyridon Skembris (2451, Greece), GM Mikhail Ivanov (2447, Russia), WGM Maria Leconte, IM Sebastien Maze, IM Ante Brkic, IM Vladimir Okhotnik, IM Fabien Libiszewski, IM Saric Ante, IM Adam Hunt, IM Timur Asanov, IM Benjamin Bujisho, Anton Aaberg and Jean Christophe Olivier. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

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Wang's cagers plaster Altas for Inter-Club title

MULTITITLED WANG'S BALLCLUB opened up hot and then shut down Perpetual Help in the fourth period to prevail, 77-55, and top the 2006 National Inter-Club basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

University of Manila mainstay Ryan Regalado and Eldrick Ferrer scored 14 points each to lead Wang's, which closed out the tournament with a 4-1 card.

San Sebastian placed third, while Spring Cooking Oil settled for fourth spot in the five-team, week-long tournament.

Wang's opened up a 25-10 lead before holding the Altas to just six points in the fourth quarter.

The Altas were still in the hunt at the start of the fourth and trailed by just 10 at 59-49. But a 12-3 Wang's run buried them, 71-52, with only four minutes left.

Jerwin Gaco of Wang's held former pro Chris Cantonjos to only eight points.

BAP auditor Tony Fabico awarded the trophy to the winners, assisted by commissioner Igmidio Cahanding Jr.

SPORTSWATCH

ACCA chess listing under way

REGISTRATION is in full swing for the February edition of the ACCA Chess Fest slated Feb. 25 and 26 at the 4th floor of Pearl Plaza Mall in Parañaque City. The fourth Saturday tournament reels off at 1 p.m. and is a mixed event among female players and executive players with 2000-below ratings. Meanwhile, the fourth Sunday tournament also starts 1 a.m. The event's Non-Master Division is open to non-titled players with a rapid rating of 2050 or below while the Kiddies Division is for students under 14 years old. The January edition was topped by San Beda's Jan Emmanuel Garcia in the under-14 division and Jerry Areque of Bacolod City in the Non Master class. Richie Evangelista of Bolinao, Pangasinan, topped the mixed ladies and executive division, while WIM Cristine Rose Mariano and Mustapha Poingan took the ladies and executive crowns, respectively.

Pacquiao favored in GCAP's San Juan tilt

PACMAN Sagupaan, the combined entry of boxing hero Manny Pacquiao and derby standout Patrick Antonio looms as the heavy favorite in today's GCAP 5-Cock Derby at the San Juan Coliseum. The 70-fight program is sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Before flying in to Los Angeles, California, tonight, Pacquiao will field his California gamefowls, trained and conditioned in his own gamefarm in General Santos City. Pacman Sagupaan is running second in the GCAP Cocker of the Year race. The frontrunners are JT Emerald of Jun Topacio, Papa Sta. Cruz of Benjie Lim and Pol Estrellado, and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 of Antonio. For inquiries, call the SJC office at 725-5369.

58 fights on tap in Makati derby today

FIFTY-EIGHT fights have been scheduled in the WTJ 3-cock derby which gets going today at the Makati Coliseum. A guaranteed prize of P200,000 is at stake in the derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace. Entrance fee is P200. Hosts Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Group said top Metro Manila derby regulars are seeing action. Last Monday, 65 fights were staged in a special 3-cock event won jointly by the entries Tony Lasala, Calle Fe, Anthony Junior and PS April 19 Tarlac. Meanwhile, the "Summer Salpukan" 6-cock derby kicks off on April 26 at the same venue with P3 million cash, two brand new Toyota cars and two motorcycles at stake. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

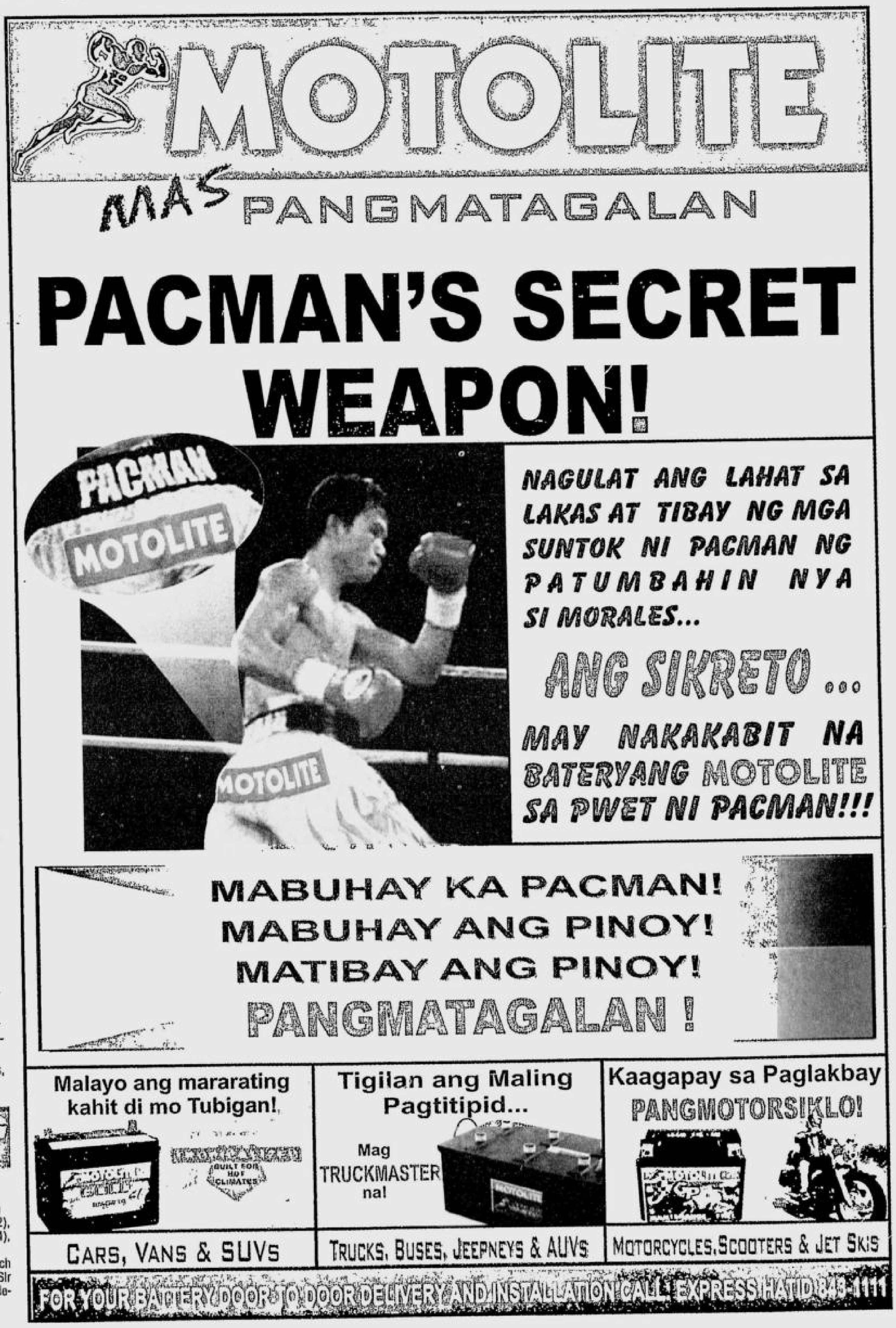
Las Piñas 3-cocker set Feb. 23 and 25

A 3-COCK derby with an entry fee of only P1,100, dubbed "Pamigay Premyo" sizzles on Feb. 23 and 25 at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias said the guaranteed prize is P110,000. A participant must hurdle the 1-cock elimination round on Feb. 23 to qualify for the 2-cock finals. Meanwhile, the Matador 4-Cock Derby of former mayor Nene Aguilar and Pasay lawyer Ching Morales kicks off on Saturday with more than 40 confirmed entries as of yesterday. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Mandalay Bay (5), Pasirit (4), Ocean Dignity (1), Master Professor (6)
Race 2—(Penta/Tri)—Even Now (2), Spanish Drums (8), Carbon Copy (4) Kate Alex (3), Tiramisu (9)
Race 3—(Tri)—Eye Candy (3), Smile Of The Wind (2), Striker (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Tri)—Valid Hazm (3), Uncle/Big Boss (7), Makati Haven (8), Sweet Peanut (10), Bom's Bom's (5)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Dashing/Once And For All (4), Dazzling Affair (2), Cool Operator (6), Shutter (1)
Race 6—(Penta/Tri)—Shifty (10), Sovereign Dancer (2), Astimegoesby (3), God Is Good (5), Bold Lucky (6)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Amazing Firenze (2), Golden Harry (5), Quant Je Puis (4), Aim and Fire (6)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Richie Rich (9), Sandok (5), Bomb Shell (2), Sir Olizon (4), Express Strike (8), Gentleman's Lady (3)



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Lebron scores 44 as Cavs rip Spurs

NEW YORK—LEBRON JAMES scored 44 points to help the Cleveland Cavaliers end the San Antonio Spurs' nine-game winning streak with a 101-87 win over the defending NBA champions at the Quicken Loans Arena on Monday.

James shot 19-for-33 from the floor and added five assists and four steals for the Cavaliers (30-21), who won for the first time in three games.

Cleveland have struggled against the NBA's better teams this season, but turned in a solid effort against the Spurs, who had also won nine straight road games before this defeat.

As usual, James was the catalyst for the Cavaliers, posting his sixth 40-point game of the season.

"LeBron is one of the best players in this league when he is on his game," Cleveland coach Mike Brown told reporters.

"He willed himself to the rim and he willed this win for us."

James also spent a lot of time covering Tony Parker and as a result, the Spurs star point guard had a tough night, scoring just four points and committing seven turnovers.

"It was a bad combination for LeBron to be great and us giving up all those turnovers and offensive rebounds," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich added.

The Cavaliers led 45-44 at the half, but took control in the third quarter and eventually built a 17-point lead at one stage in the fourth.

James scored 18 of his points in the third quarter and had 36 points by the time the fourth quarter started.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers, while Drew Gooden chipped in with 10 points and 10 rebounds.

San Antonio shot 51 percent from the field to 49 percent for the Cavs, but the Spurs committed 18 turnovers to just five for Cleveland. The Spurs were also just 14-for-24 from the line.

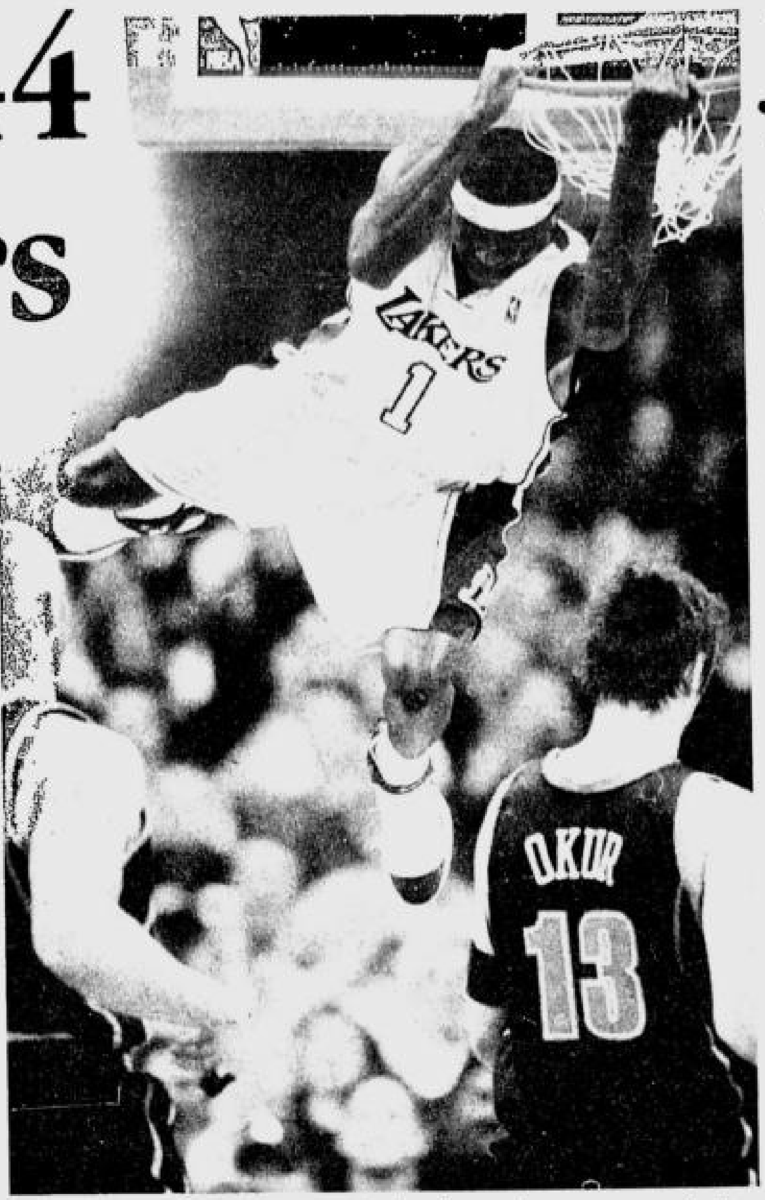
Tim Duncan led San Antonio with 19 points and 10 rebounds, but he scored just three points in the final quarter.Manu Ginobili and Beno Udrih both added 12 points for the Spurs.

The Spurs (40-11) dropped into a first place tie with Dallas in the Southwest Division as the Mavericks routed the New York Knicks 100-72 at home.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 21 points and Josh Howard added 14 points for the Mavericks. *Reuters*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Cleveland 101, San Antonio 87; Portland 91, Charlotte 83; Toronto 98, Minnesota 94; N.O./ Oklahoma City 97, Washington 96; Dallas 100, NY Knicks 72.

SOLAR Sports will air at 11:30 a.m. today the Houston-LA Clippers tussle. It will be replayed at 5:30 p.m. Sportsplus will feature the New Jersey-Detroit tiff at 7 a.m., followed by the Orlando-Miami encounter at 9:30 p.m.



LAKERS' Smush Parker hangs on the rim after scoring on a reverse dunk as Jazz's Carlos Boozer (left) and Mehmet Okur look on in their NBA game Feb. 13. Parker was called for a technical foul for hanging on the rim. AP

Jaidee eyes hat trick in KL tourney

LONDON—THAILAND'S THONGCHAI JAIDEE will join a select band of players if he wins the Malaysian Open for the third year in a row at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club on Sunday.

Only Ian Woosnam (Monte Carlo Open, 1990-92), Nick Faldo (Irish Open, 1991-93), Colin Montgomerie (PGA Championship, 1998-2000), Tiger Woods (WGC-NEC Invitational, 1999-2001) and Ernie Els (Heineken Classic, 2002-04) have previously achieved a title hat-trick.

The 36-year-old Thongchai, a late beginner in the sport, became the first Asian to retain a European Tour crown when he won at the Saujana Golf and Country Club 12 months ago.

"I have a lot of good friends in the city," he told the European Tour's official website. "I am always looked after very well and it feels like my second home.

"I have enjoyed some success there in the last two years and I will try to win for a third time. It would be very nice."

Thongchai prepared for his treble attempt by visiting the tournament venue at the end of 2005.

"Before the New Year I went to the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club for some practice rounds," he said. "The course was very soft then but the rough was also up so I think it will be a demanding week.

"I generally like the golf courses in Malaysia. The greens are receptive and that makes it easier for us to control our approach shots.

"The greens are tricky in places because of the undulations and the layout is such that you need to think your way round that golf course. It will be a good test."

Padraig Harrington of Ireland and Spain's Miguel Angel Jimenez lead a European bid to deny Thongchai his place in the history books.

Harrington will make his first appearance of the year in Thursday's opening round.

The Dubliner has had a run of near misses in the tournament, having been runner-up twice and in the top 10 on two other occasions.

Harrington was joint eighth last year, fading from contention with a closing 74 that left him 11 shots behind Thongchai.

Among the leading challengers is Lian-Wei Zhang, 40, who has five Asian Tour wins to his credit. In 2004, he became the first Chinese player to compete in the US Masters at Augusta. *Reuters*

FRENCH skater Yannick Bonheur throws partner Marylin Pla during their performance in the Pairs Free Skating program. AFP

Russians grab 12th straight pairs gold; US bets prevail

TURIN, ITALY—WITH GOLD-MEDAL WINning grace, figure skaters Tatiana Totmianina and Maxim Marinen delivered Russia its 12th straight Olympic pairs title.

Around them, there were spectacular crashes everywhere Monday at the Turin Winter Games.

Helicopters and ambulances ferried injured skiers, boarders and luge sliders off the Olympic slopes to local hospitals.

Winning the first figure skating gold of the Turin Games, Russia's "Tot and Max" performed their best programs ever to continue a winning sequence by Russia or the Soviet Union that extends back to the 1964 Olympics.

Earlier, Russia's Svetlana Ishmouratova nailed 19 of 20 targets on Cesana San Sicaria's 15-kilometer biathlon course to finish in 49 minutes, 24.1 seconds. Teammate Olga Pyleva took silver.

In sunny Bardonecchia, the day belonged to the American snowboarders. Following the men's example from the day before, Hannah Teter won gold and Gretchen Bleiler won silver in the halfpipe. *AP*

Agassi skips San Jose tilt with strained back

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA—ANDRE Agassi withdrew from this week's SAP Open because of a strained lower back, the latest injury setback for the star player.

Agassi, who was seeded second in the ATP event which began on Monday, told tournament director Bill Rapp on Sunday that he couldn't play.

Agassi experienced severe pain in his lower back and down his legs during a workout on Sunday, tournament officials said in a news release.

Agassi, 35, has played only four matches since reaching the US Open final last September. He sprained his left ankle playing racquetball on Oct. 12.

Agassi aggravated the injury during the season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai, where he was upset by Nikolay Davydenko in the first round.

He pulled out of last month's Australian Open because of the injury and then lost to Guillermo Garcia-Lopez in the quarterfinals of the Delray Beach Championships this month in his first tournament of the year.

Agassi is currently ranked eighth in the world. His only tournament win last season came in Los Angeles, and he lost to world No. 1 Roger Federer in the US Open final in September. *AP*

AGASSI

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Find out who will be the next... American Idol
ON YOUR IDOL NETWORK ABC Iba Tayo!
Wednesday & Thursday 10PM

Provided by ClickTheCity.com

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ABC 5	WNCAA (Replay) PBA Sentro PBA Big News American Idol 5 Billboard On-Air Insider
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema Little Amy Mr Bean Naruto Amazing Twins Meteor Garden Season 2 TV Patrol World Gulong Ng Palad Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit Pinoy Big Brother Vietnam Rose Forbidden Love SOCO
AXN	David Blaine: Vertigo Next Action Star When Animals Attack Lost 24 30 Seconds To Fame Samsung Sports World Ultimate Guinness World Records Ultimate Guinness World Records CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6) CSI: Miami (Season II)
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo Dexter's Laboratory Tom & Jerry Show Baby Looney Tunes Codename: Kids Next Door Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Power Rangers Wild Force The Gransazers Battle B-Daman Energy Bomb X-Men Evolution Samurai Jack Justice League Static Shock Power Rangers Wild Force The Gransazers
Cinema One	Maalaala Mo Kaya (The Movie) Now That I Have You Pahiram Kahit Sandali Persona Eskapo (9:15 PM) I Will Survive
Cinemax	The Guns Of Navarone The Prosecutors (6:15 PM) Running Against Time The Firm
CNN	Business International World News World Sport Larry King Live Business International World News Asia World News World Sport World News Asia World News World Sport
Discovery Channel	Zero Hour American Chopper Becoming A Man Secrets To Survival Wild Discovery Hour China Man Made Marvels A Haunting Secrets To Survival
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series Totally Spies Art Attack/Unlalative Bunny Mickey Mouse and Friends Lilo & Stitch Sabrina: The Animated Series Totally Spies Kim Possible Mr Bean: The Animated Series That's So Raven Wonderful World Of Disney American Dragon Mickey Mouse and Friends Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger Wonderful World Of Disney
ESPN	Pro Billiards '04 Skins Billiards C'ships Mosconi Cup '01 Winter X Games Classic Motorsport Asia Pool Snooker World Pool League '04 Poland Sportscenter Asia Pool/ Snooker World Pool League '04 Poland Motorsport Asia Pool/ Snooker Premier Snooker League '05 Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Average Joe Change of Heart Elimidate Blind Date Fifth Wheel Seinfeld Ambush Makeover The Tyra Banks Show Veronica Mars Beauty & The Geek Entertainment Tonight The Insider The Tonight Show With Jay Leno
EWTN	Marriage Works in Christ Angelus (3:15 PM) Faith In Motion Adventures In Odyssey EWTN Original Productions Rosary With Mother Angelica Defending Life EWTN Gallery In The Heart Of The Church Mother Angelica Live Classics One In Their Hearts Catholic Social Teaching Daily Mass (SAP) Live Angelus (10:15PM) Carpenter's Shop Our Father's Plan
Fox News	Hannity & Colmes On The Record With Greta Van Susteren The O'Reilly Factor Your World With Neil Cavuto Fox & Friends Fox News Live
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako Now and Forever First Love Of A Royale Prince Dragonball Z Great Teacher Onizuka Le Robe de Mariage 24 Oras Extra Challenge Sugo Etheria Starstruck 3 Jewel In The Palace Nuts Entertainment Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched Family Law III In Love And War (3:50 PM) Who's The Boss? II Bewitched The Nanny Strong Medicine Judging Amy Spin Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II Strong Medicine Betrayal
HBO	I Capture The Castle (3:15 PM) Perfect Romance (5:15 PM) Peter Pan The Last Samurai
IBC 13	EZ Shop Home Shopping Network IBC Express Balita Lifestyle Retro TV Good Take Travel Global Family Series Japan Video Topics Up Close And Personal IBC News Tonite Home Shopping Network
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart The Late Show David Letterman Heat Velocity X-Men Street Smarts Mad TV That 70s Show Arrested Development The Late Show David Letterman The Daily Show With Jon Stewart Premium Blend Primetime Glick Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network	Country Style Interiors By Design Decorating With Style Decorating Cents Molto Mario Sweet Dreams 30 Minute Meals Bill Boggs Corner Unwrapped Wolfgang Puck's E! Entertainment Special Style Star Life & Style Intimate Portrait Breathing Room Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	Jams Whatever Things MTV Hits The 70's House Pop Inc MTV Hits VH1 All Access Homecoming Get Spotted TRL Viva La Bam Laguna Beach Get Hitch'd VH1 Video Collections
MYX	Rock MYX My MYX Mellow MYX Urban MYX Take 5 OPM MYX MYX Firsts Star MYX MYXILOG Pop MYX MYX Daily Top Ten MYX Live! Urban MYX My MYX MYX Backtrax OPM MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets Hunter Hunted Interpol Investigates Science Times Top 5 - Mysterious Universe Wow! About Asia Nat'l Geographic Specials Hunter Hunted Interpol Investigates
NBN	Value Vision New Life TV Shopping Teledyaryo Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila? Talk Ko To Tinig ng Bayan (Live) Teledyaryo Krusada Kontra Krimen Bantay OCW With Susan K
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone Hey Arnold! Rocket Power Four Eyes My Life As A Teenage Robot SpongeBob SquarePants The Fairly Odd Parents Drake & Josh Naturally Sadie Romeo All That All Grown Up As Told By Ginger Four Eyes My Life As A Teenage Robot The Adventures Jimmy Neutron The Fairly Odd Parents My Dad The Rock Star
PBO	Motown Greatest Hits Concert Matira Ang Matibay Miguelito Ang Batang Rebelde Masamang Ugat Lipa Arandia Massacre
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin Striker Hungry Heart The Prince Of Tennis MMS (My Music Station) Moms Love At Aegean Sea Hotelier All In Laugh To Laugh Ang Kulit Pusong Wagi News On Q Balikbayan MINT (Music Interactive)
RPN 9	TV Shopping Defenders Of The Earth Global Window Entertainment Tonight The Insider Iron Chef Trading Spouses Extreme Make-Over Newswatch Now Just For Laughs (Gags) Money Talk
SBN 21	New Life TV Shopping Winner TV Shopping Oras Ng Himala Oras ng Katotohanan SBN Music Video
Solar Sports	WTA 2005 Tour C'ships by LA Finals NBA Jam Sagupaan NBA Special '05 NBA All-Star Game Sportsdesk NBA Inside Stuff Sportsdesk All England Semifinals
Sports Plus	PAC 10 Basketball Boston College @ Georgia Tech World Poker Tour 2 NBA Game New Jersey @ Detroit NBA Game Orlando @ Miami
Star Movies	The Hurricane (3:05 PM) The Glass House Legally Blonde 2: Red White & Blonde Ever After: A Cinderella Story Edward Scissorhands
Star World	The Bold & The Beautiful General Hospital Angel American Idol 2006 Star News Asia Friends (Series 10) American Idol 2006 Medical Investigation Smallville Friends (Series 10) American Idol 2006
Studio 23	Batman Beyond Spirits Wazzup Wazzup The Amazing Race Family Edn CSI (8:20 PM) Life As We Know It News Central Oprah Just Shoot Me

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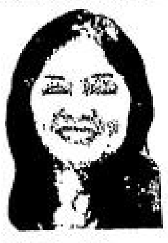
Filipino-Mexican ring war looms

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

HE WANTED ME to call again after his meeting with Alaxan executives, but I didn't dare take the chance.

I had been trying to touch base with the man for the last 48 hours and I didn't want to wait another 48. Or more, lest he slip away again. Man-of-the-hour Manny Pacquiao hardly answers his cellphone now, and it is probably easier to get through to the President of the Philippines than to the country's "most wanted" person these days.

"Just two questions," I bargained. He obliged.

"How do you feel about doing the blow-by-blow account for television of the Brian Viloria-Jose Antonio Aguirre fight in Las Vegas on Feb. 18 (Feb. 19 in Manila)?"

* * *

In a television interview where he was asked the same question, I heard Manny say that he's excited about the prospect because it's the first time he's doing something like this.

But Pacman had a different answer for me. *"Para sa akin, isang malaking karangalan na mapili ako ni* Brian," he said, disclosing that he and the Fil-Am boxer had developed a close friendship over the past months.

"Close *kami kasi ang* trainer *namin, iisa—si* Freddie Roach. *Ang* gym *na pinagpapraktisan namin, iisa rin—yung* Wild Card Gym *sa* Los Angeles. *Yung mga kaibigan niya, kaibigan ko. Halos araw-araw nagkakasama kami pag nasa* Los Angeles *ako,"* Manny said.

Spontaneously, I blurted out a follow-up question: "Do you have any plans of staging a fight here in the Philippines with Brian in the undercard?"

It was not the second question I intended to ask, but I couldn't take it back because Manny was quick to the draw.

"In the works *na yan. Hindi lang si* Brian *ang kasama, marami pang iba* like Boom Boom Bautista, Jimrex Jaca. *Parang* dual meet *ang mangyayari*: Filipino boxers versus Mexican boxers. *Para mabigyan naman ng* break *ang mga* boxers *natin,"* Manny said.

* * *

Realizing that I had used up my two-query quota, I appealed. *"Puwede bang tumawad, isa pang* question? *Sa tingin mo, saan dapat mag-*improve *si* Brian?" I asked.

Manny was quiet for a while.

"Improve, improve, improve… ," he was thinking out loud. "More jabs and more hip movement."

I had actually prepared six questions. I thanked Manny who graciously granted the interview, even if he was in the midst of an important meeting, and advised him to go easy on the blow-by-blow.

"Huwag mong masyadong galingan, dahil baka mawalan ng trabaho si Quinito (Henson) *at si* Chino (Trinidad)," I said.

* * *

By way of a post-Valentine treat, the PBA is adding a dash of drama and romance to today's Game 4 of the San Mig Fiesta Cup best-of-seven title series.

I don't know how ABC-5 intends to do the side feature—whether it will be done on court or right where the lady seats. All I know is that young and dashing Purefoods hero James Yap will do something similar to what Vince Hizon did to then Patricia Bermudez, who is now his wife.

No, James will not ask for Kris Aquino's hand in marriage, like Vince did to Patricia. But he will profess his love for her publicly by presenting her with roses. It could be just a single red rose or dozens, to put the message across loudly.

I was not told if there would be a kissing scene. Kris celebrated her birthday on Valentine's Day yesterday, while James is observing his today.

* * *

It's hard to believe that Dave Batista, the WWE wrestling superstar with a humongous physique, is Filipino. But they say he is, although I still have to confirm this.

They say his real surname is Bautista but that his promoters have changed this to "Batista" to make it sound more exotic.

"Will he be here in Manila for the WWE Raw Live? I asked Solar Entertainment COO Peter Chanliong, who, to answer my query, had to give me a short lecture on professional wrestling.

The wrestlers seeing action in Manila this February belong to the Raw group, while Batista is part of Smackdown, Peter said.

Due to the projected success of the Feb. 24-25 event, Peter said there are plans to bring Batista's group here in October.

* * *

While still on the topic of wrestling, I got another interesting update on Coke cager Rudy Hatfield from San Miguel exec Robert Non, who said that Rudy may decide to return to the PBA after all.

Confirming that the Fil-Am cager had indeed taken a fireman's course in Detroit to complete his college curriculum, Robert said Rudy had also tried to go into professional wrestling.

I suppose the cager didn't have enough bulk and hulk required in wrestling, because he failed to make the grade.

Pacman sees Viloria winning by stoppage

BRIAN Viloria celebrates his victory over Eric Ortiz of Mexico in Los Angeles last year. AP

BRIAN VILORIA HAS THE TOOLS TO stop Mexican Jose Antonio Aguirre in his first defense of the World Boxing Council (WBC) light flyweight crown on Saturday (Sunday in Manila) at the Aladdin Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, according to Manny Pacquiao.

"Brian is stronger and faster," world super featherweight icon Pacquiao said in Filipino. "All he has to do is find the right time and opportunity to land his knockout punch."

Pacquiao has great respect for the speed and punching power of Viloria. He has seen him fight and they train together in trainer Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles, California.

"I'm sure Aguirre will be defensive-minded because he is aware of his (Viloria's) power," Pacquiao said.

Viloria, 25, captured the title with a sensational first-round knockout of champion, Eric Ortiz, another Mexican, last Sept. 10 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. That was the same night Pacquiao destroyed Hector Velasquez in six rounds.

Viloria, son of an Ilocano couple from Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, is undefeated in 18 fights, 12 by knockout.

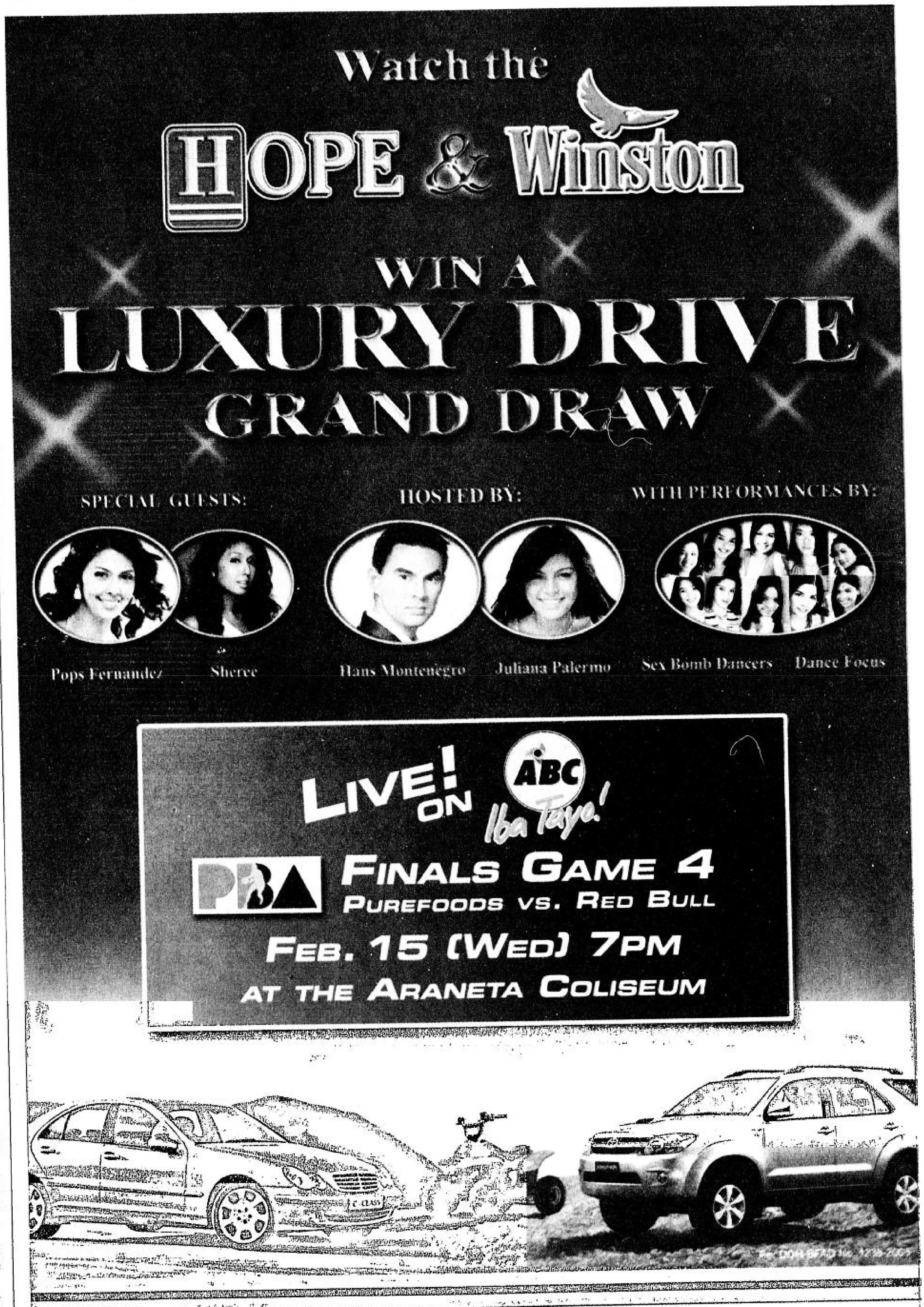
Pacquiao, who will be on deck along with veteran boxing commentator Quinito Henson to annotate Viloria's first title-defense, also gave the 108-lb king some pointers so he can land his killer punch.

"He (Viloria) should throw more jabs and move his hips more often," Pacquiao said.

The jabs, he said, will build Viloria's rhythm and timing while the hip movement will help him catch his opponent off-guard.

"It's like the crossover in basketball," said Pacquiao, referring to the hip movement. "Your foe will not know where your punch will come."

But he advised Viloria not to lower his guard. Aguirre is a former champion, having ruled the WBC minimumweight division for nearly four years. The fighter called "El Jaguar" totes a 33-4-1 record with 20 KOs.



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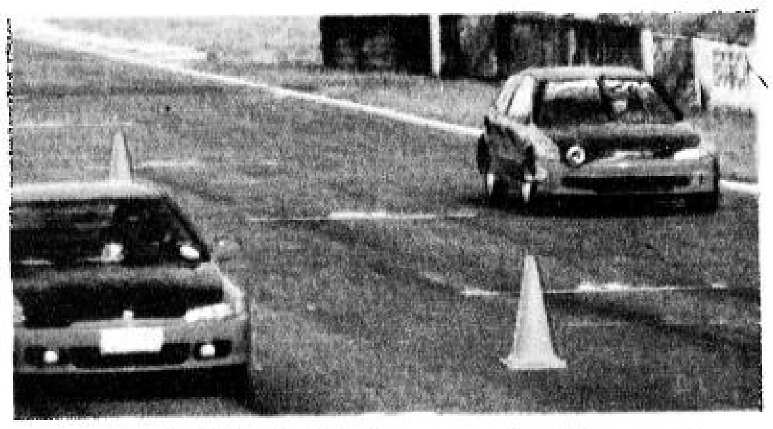

BLANCHE Racing's Leo Joel Cordero zooms ahead of teammate Dave Jota in the finals faceoff at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Cordero bags nat'l drag racing crown

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—LEO JOEL Cordero of Blanche Racing bagged drag racing's Driver of the Year award following his impressive victory in the final round of the 2005 Red Horse-PCSO National Drag Racing Championship Series recently at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Cordero turned back teammate Dave Jota in the finals, clocking 13.349 seconds to capture the Pro class plum and finish with 45 points, the same output of Quick 8 champion Walter Pazon of Blanche Racing and Sportsman Class winner Bobby Cunanan of Just Racing.

But BRC drag racing director Fil Gulfin picked Cordero to receive the Drag Racer of the Year for having the most number of wins and a faster time.

"The first basis of the tiebreak was the number of wins, which booted out Pazon from contention," Gulfin explained. "The second was the time, and Cordero had posted the faster time over Cunanan."

Cordero will receive the top purse of P50,000 and the championship trophy during the 2005 Golden Wheel Award set Feb. 28 at the Casino-Filipino Parañaque.

Pazon and Cunanan ended up with P15,000 each as champions in their respective divisions in the event held in cooperation with the Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP) and sponsored by Red Horse, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Petron, Sparco and supported by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Denso Spark Plugs, Casino Filipino, GV 99.9 FM and DaBest98.5 FM.

Pazon ended up as runner-up to teammate Dave Jota who registered a new track time of 11.833 seconds in the final race, but his four-leg total of 45 points earned him the Quick 8 championship.

Cunanan ruled the Sportsman Class over Felix Perez of Alps team with a time of 15.882 seconds.

Raymond Conti emerged the overall champion in the Hotstreet division despite finishing runner-up to Romeo Manuel, who ruled the final leg with a time of 16.403.

Bong de la Cruz bagged the Thunder class crown, clocking 14.558 seconds over Nathan Saguil of Just Racing.

RP muay team spots in world tilt at stake

SPOTS IN THE PHILIPPINE TEAM that will compete in the 3rd World Muay Thai meet late next month will be up for grabs in the 2006 National Championships set March 4 at the Amoranto Sports Complex in Quezon City.

The Quezon City government, led by Mayor Sonny Belmonte and Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, is hosting the event that would hope to tap only the best for Team Philippines in the world joust in Thailand on March 18-26.

World Muay Thai rules and regulations will be enforced during the national championships.

Competitions will be held in 12 categories ranging from 42 to 91-plus kilograms in the men's and women's senior division.

Categories in the 38 and 42 kg divisions in the junior level (10-17 years old) for both men and women have also been added.

Aerobic Muay Thai will also be featured in the tournament for the first time, as are the wai kru and muayboran.

For inquiries, call 02-8929176, 074-4218361, 0916-2289131 or 0920-2927588.

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"IT'S TIME to give back to the industry," says the Mowelfund executive director.
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

TAKE FIVE

Mowelfund mediatrix

... a.k.a. Boots Anson-Roa, who says she will move heaven and earth—and eat humble pie—for the welfare of movie workers

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff

THE LEGENDARY actress Rita Gomez once cracked that colleague Boots Anson-Roa's screen image was so pristine, it would be easy to make people believe she had children by immaculate conception.

But as far as husband Pete Roa is concerned, the Mowelfund executive director is "more like Our Lady of Perpetual Help."

Boots explains what she refers to as her coping mechanism: "I have to listen to my husband. He always tells me, 'Don't let your mediatrix complex get the better of you. You can't solve the world's problems on your own.' Me, I tend to drown in the problems at work."

As she admitted during a recent visit to the INQUIRER, Mowelfund's concerns can be a tad Herculean as it involves the welfare benefits of the oft-neglected and exploited movie workers.

But Boots, who recently marked her 61st birthday with a big fundraiser at Merk's, is not one to shy away from challenges.

She is in the thick of preparations for the annual "Pelikula at Lipunan" film fest (spearheaded by Nick Deocampo) set at the Gateway Mall from Feb. 24 to March 19 and Mowelfund's 32nd anniversary on March 11.

How was the fundraiser at Merk's?

We were there until 1:30 a.m. Around 20 artists performed for free—Pilita Corrales, Kuh Ledesma, Ramon Jacinto, Ivy Violan, Jenine Desiderio, Jacqui Magno, Tirso Cruz III, Ciara Sotto, Joy Viado ... and Richard Merk, of course. Cesar Montano and Ricky Davao did a duet! German Moreno and my daughter Chiqui Roa-Puno hosted the show. We raised around P500,000—donations from Ramon Revilla Sr., Tony Tuviera, Sharon Cuneta, Juan Ponce-Enrile, Jose Mari Chan, Precy Tolentino, among others. In the 2005 birthday concert, we raised P300,000.

How helpful were the funds raised last year?

We have lots of projects. But in 2001, a year before I became executive director, Mowelfund had to slash the members' benefits—for example, the death benefit from P35,000 to P25,000 and medicine reimbursement from P5,000 to P3,000. That was because our subsidy from the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) had gone down by 50 percent. We used to receive 60 percent of the amusement taxes, but now it's down to 30 percent. After the 2005 fundraiser, however, we restored the benefits to the original figures.

You have mentioned Mowelfund's graying membership as another challenge.

We have more honorary members, those who have been members in good standing for 10 consecutive years and have reached age 60. When a member acquires honorary status, he no longer needs to pay the annual fee of P300. Out of 4,500 members, 2,700 are active. Among the active members, 700 have reached honorary status.

Is it true that you have to resort to "creative" ways to solve Mowelfund's financial problems?

We had an *ukay-ukay* [garage sale] once. I also joined [the TV show] "Game KNB?," along with other Mowelfund members Eddie Romero, Joel Torre, Rez Cortez and Caridad Sanchez. I told Direk Eddie, a National Artist for Film: "Let's eat humble pie for Mowelfund." It was so funny; I was eliminated in the first round. The question was: Are the characters in the cartoon "Rug Rats" mice? I said, 'Yes!' Joel won P300,000 for us. He also won a computer showcase which I turned over to our graphics department.

Is it true that Mowelfund is the only one of its kind in the world?

That we know of. We feel heartened because other local groups are planning similar welfare systems.

Jun Nicdao of the Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) and Raul Alvarez of the Advertising Board of the Philippines have approached us. We'll lend them our charter and by-laws.

Why did you agree to head Mowelfund?

In the words of our staff, "I was set up!" Hahaha! I became a board member in 1994. I was aware of what was happening. Still, I accepted because the movie industry has been very generous to my family. My father [Oscar Moreno] raised us with his earnings as an actor. Now, I am also making a good living in show biz. I felt it was time to give back.

Do you still have time for acting?

I have to make time. This is my bread and butter. I did the [MMFF entry] "Blue Moon" and [GMA 7 show] "Sugo." Now, I am in the film "Sukob," under Star Cinema. I was also offered to play Donita Rose's mother in an international movie.

You also did the digital film "Ilusyon"?

It was just a one-day shoot. I was also in Peque Gallaga's "Pinoy Blonde."

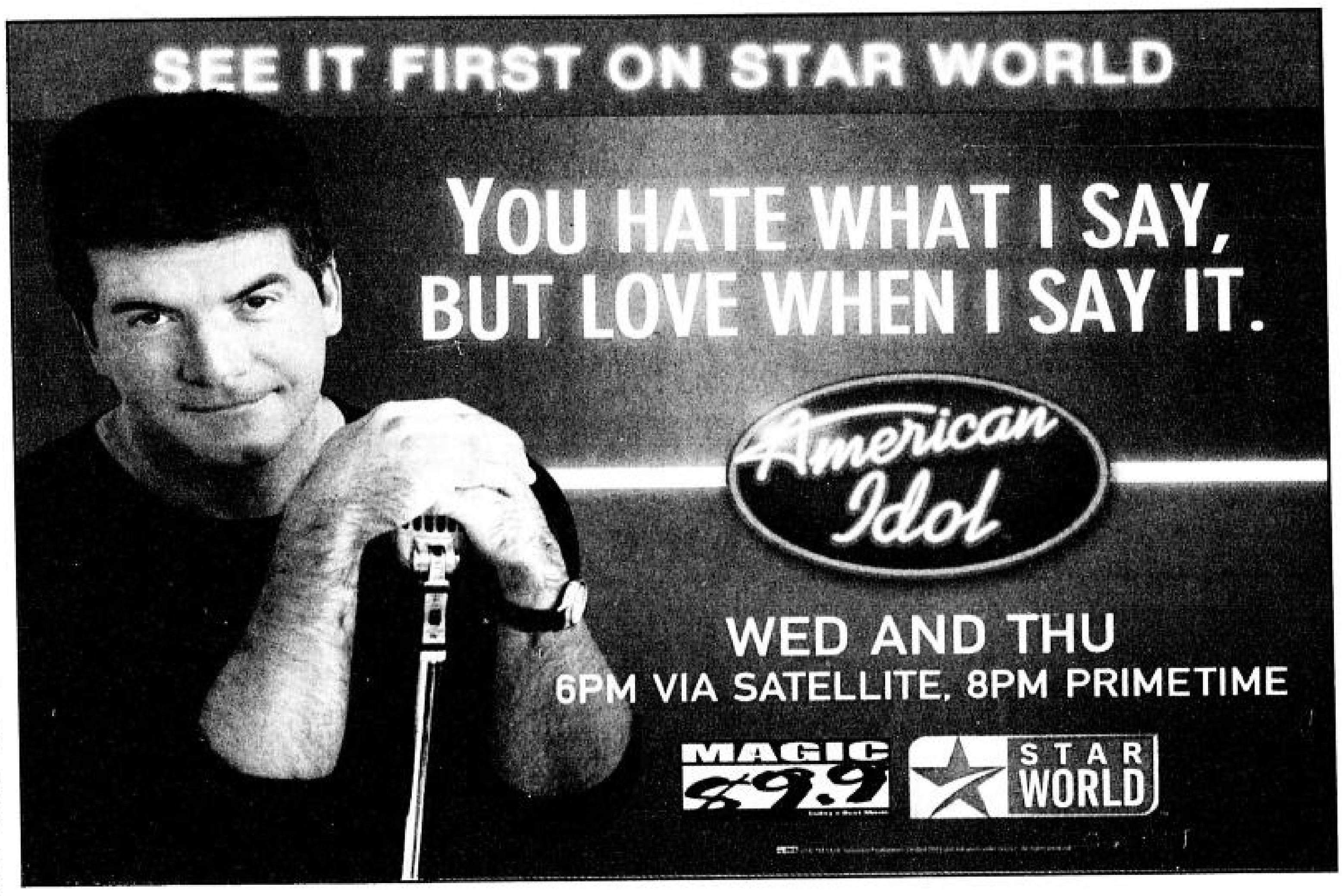
I said yes to "Ilusyon" because its directors, Paolo Villaluna and Ellen Ramos, were former staffers and graduates of Mowelfund. We have a film education component that has produced an impressive list of graduates—Lav Diaz, Mark Meily, Yam Laranas, Neil Daza ...

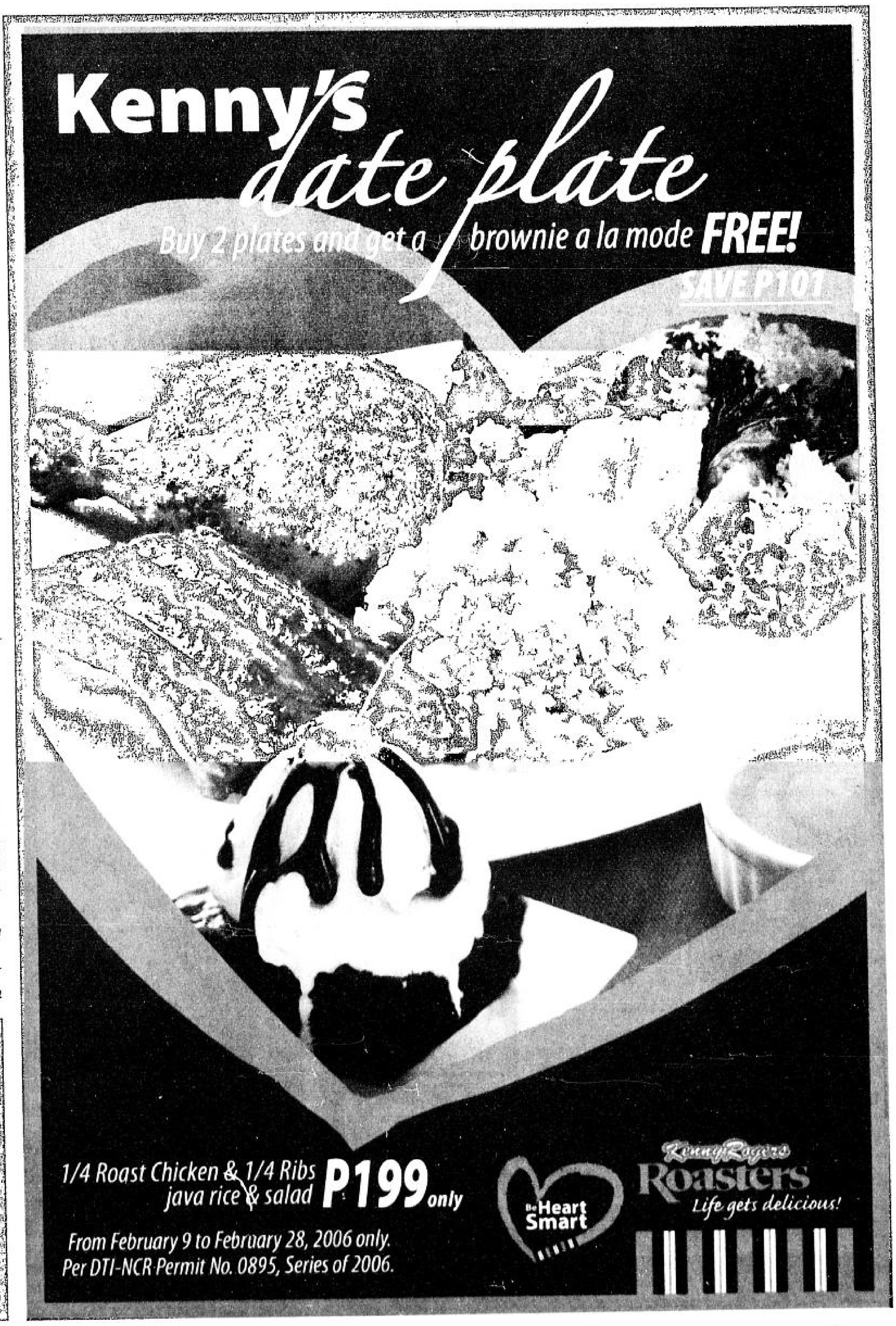
What's your take on the MMFF controversies?

As [Metro Manila Develop-

MOWELFUND/ A2-2

All the movies you want to see on the big screen
NOW SHOWING at the Star Group of Malls
starmall EDSA · SHAW
Tel No. 726 8150
3: Close To You
4: I Will Always Love You
5: New World
METROPOLIS ALABANG Star
Tel No. 850 4285
1: I Will Always Love You
2: Close To You
3: New World
4: Brokeback Mountain
Everyday Family Day at StarMalls!
Every Tuesdays Stand-Up Comedy. Every Fridays Live Acoustic Bands at Cuba Libre Bar Starmall Edsa
Every Tuesdays Thursdays Live Bands. Every Fridays Stand-Up Comedy at Mark's KTV Metropolis
Star In A Million Mall Tour - Feb 26 Sunday Metropolis Alabang


SEE IT FIRST ON STAR WORLD
YOU HATE WHAT I SAY, BUT LOVE WHEN I SAY IT.
American Idol
WED AND THU
6PM VIA SATELLITE, 8PM PRIMETIME
MAGIC 89.9
STAR WORLD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Buy 2 plates and get a brownie a la mode FREE!
SAVE P101
1/4 Roast Chicken & 1/4 Ribs java rice & salad P199 only
Be Heart Smart
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Life gets delicious!
From February 9 to February 28, 2006 only.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0895, Series of 2006.

Mowelfund mediatrix

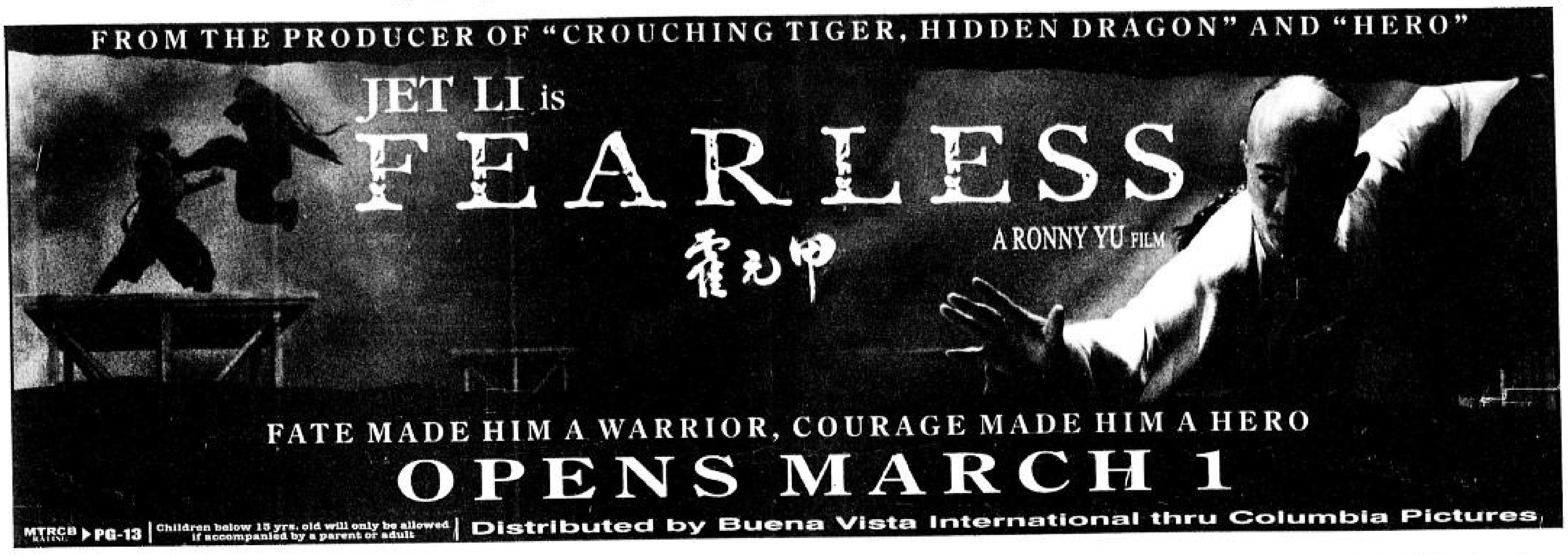
From page A2-1

ment Authority] Chair Bayani Fernando would say, intrigue is the MMFF's twin.

As head of Mowelfund, I'm a member of the MMFF executive committee. But to avoid [conflict of interests], I begged off from meetings in which "Blue Moon" was in the agenda.

There's a call to abolish the MMFF

Of course, I don't agree. This is self-serving and selfish, I admit, because Mowelfund is a beneficiary of the MMFF. On a higher plane, I believe the MMFF has really helped the industry. Let us not lose sight of that fact.


FROM THE PRODUCER OF "CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON" AND "HERO"
JET LI is
FEARLESS
霍元甲
A RONNY YU FILM
FATE MADE HIM A WARRIOR, COURAGE MADE HIM A HERO
OPENS MARCH 1
MTRCB RATING ▶PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

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6th floor Shangrila Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard; Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171

1 (DOLBY)	PINK PANTHER GP
2 (DOLBY)	AEON FLUX R13
3 (DOLBY)	EIGA SAI 2006
4 (DOLBY)	BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN R18

PREMIERE

(DOLBY)	GOAL GP

Filinvest
FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DTS)	UNDERWORLD-2
2 (SDDS)	FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 (DTS)	FIREWALL
4 GOLD (DTS)	PINK PANTHER
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
6 GOLD (SDDS)	GOAL
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	AEON FLUX
8 (DOLBY STEREO)	CLOSE TO YOU
9 (DOLBY STEREO)	CLOSE TO YOU
10 (DOLBY STEREO)	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
2 (DOLBY)	PINK PANTHER
3 (DOLBY)	AEON FLUX
4 (DOLBY)	GOAL

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 (DTS)	CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY)	UNDERWORLD
4	PINK PANTHER

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1	PINK PANTHER
2 (DOLBY)	CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DTS)	UNDERWORLD-2
4	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY)	DERAILED

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY)	DERAILED
4 (DTS)	SAW-2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	UNDERWORLD-2
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY)	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	CLOSE TO YOU

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	PINK PANTHER
2	AEON FLUX
3	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4	CLOSE TO YOU

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	PINK PANTHER
2 (DOLBY)	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 (DOLBY)	CLOSE TO YOU
4 (DOLBY)	RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY)	GOAL
2	AEON FLUX
3	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4	CLOSE TO YOU
5	BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3	THE NEW WORLD
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	CLOSE TO YOU
5	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3	PLEASE CALL
4	RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
3	CLOSE TO YOU
4	THE NEW WORLD

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3	SAW-2

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1	PINK PANTHER
2	THE MAID

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DTS EX)	UNDERWORLD
4	PINK PANTHER

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan,
Telephone No. (044) 600-3025

1	CLOSE TO YOU
2	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3	

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3 (DOLBY)	RESERVED
4 (DTS)	RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY)	DERAILED
4 (DTS)	WALK THE LINE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel. (042) 660-5271

☆	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
☆	CLOSE TO YOU
☆	RESERVED
☆	RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2	ZATHURA

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	PLEASE CALL
2	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	PLEASE CALL
2	PLEASE CALL
3	TUKSO
4 (DTS)	PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	CLOSE TO YOU
2	TUKSO
3 (DTS)	PINK PANTHER
4	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5	UNDERWORLD-2

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

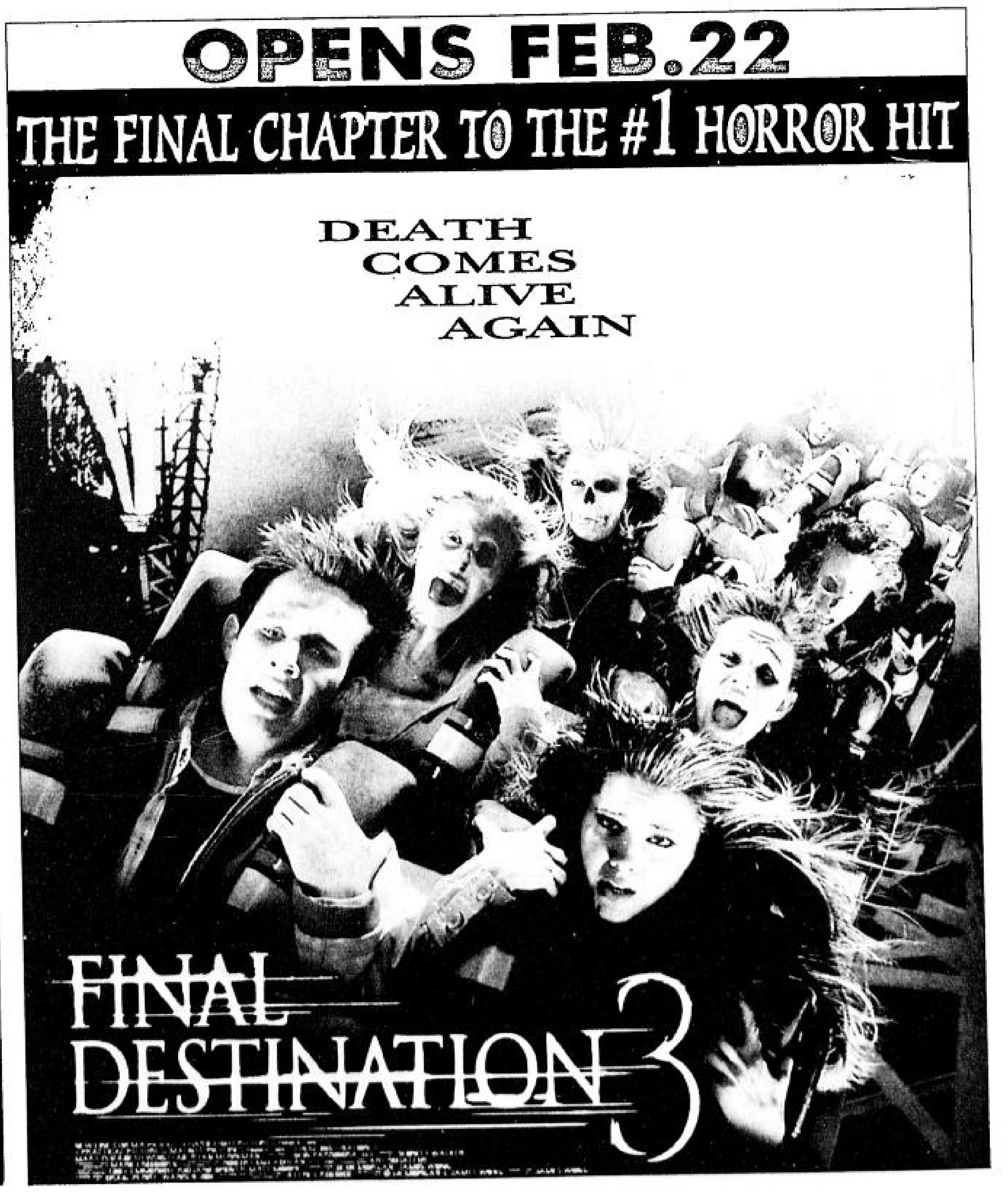
1	WALK THE LINE
2	CLOSE TO YOU
3	PLEASE CALL
4	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	SAW-2
2	PLEASE CALL

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

The most romantic film this Valentine Season.
John Lloyd Cruz and Bea Alonzo
introducing Sam Milby
Close to you
closeup
DIRECTED BY
CATHY GARCIA-MOLINA
Star Cinema
ABS-CBN
GRAND OPENING TODAY
IN MORE THAN 100 THEATERS NATIONWIDE


OPENS FEB.22
THE FINAL CHAPTER TO THE #1 HORROR HIT
DEATH
COMES
ALIVE
AGAIN
FINAL DESTINATION 3

ROUNDUP

'Panther' strikes

LOS ANGELES—Inspector Clouseau bumbled his way to the top of the box office as Steve Martin's "The Pink Panther" debuted with $21.7 million to lead a rush of new releases.

The overall box office rose slightly despite the Winter Olympics and a Northeast snowstorm, both of which kept many moviegoers at home.

Estimated ticket sales for the top 10 movies Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official tracker:

1) "The Pink Panther," $21.7M; 2) "Final Destination 3," $20.1M; 3) "Curious George," $15.3M; 4) "Firewall," $13.8M; 5) "When a Stranger Calls," $10M; 6) "Big Momma's House 2," $6.8M; 7) "Nanny McPhee," $5.2M; 8) "Brokeback Mountain," $4.2M; 9) "Hoodwinked," $2.502M; 10) "Underworld Evolution," $2.5M. *AP*

NORAH Jones

Film debut

HONG KONG—Grammy-winning singer Norah Jones will make her film debut in the first English-language film by acclaimed Hong Kong art-house director Wong Kar-wai, a film industry consultant said.

Wong was originally scheduled to shoot "Lady from Shanghai," featuring Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman, but has delayed the project until 2007 because they have not found a strong male lead actor, a film industry consultant attending the ongoing Berlin Film Festival told The Associated Press by phone.

Details of the new movie weren't immediately available. *AP*

Out of control

NEW YORK—The Sundance Film Festival is too intense for Robert Redford, who says he wasn't around for all of it this year.

"To the outside world, it's a big fat market where you have people like Paris Hilton going to parties. Now, she doesn't have anything to do with anything. I think the festival is close to being out of control," the festival's creator told Newsweek. *AP*

Peter Benchley, 65

NEW YORK—Peter Benchley, author of the bestseller "Jaws" that was the basis for the blockbuster movie, died at his home at age 65, his family said on Sunday.

The book has sold more than 20 million copies, and Benchley even had a cameo as a reporter in the 1975 Steven Spielberg film.

Well-known for other water-based suspense fiction including "The Deep" and "The Island," which also spawned films, Benchley died of complications from pulmonary fibrosis, his son-in-law Chris Turner said. *Reuters*

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

MOVIEWORLD

CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA 632-9116

1 MUNICH • THX
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
4 GOAL
5 PINK PANTHER
6 AEON FLUX
7 FIREWALL
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 NEW WORLD
10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

ERMITA 638-7809 to 12

1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 FUN with DICK and JANE
FIREWALL
3 NEW WORLD
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 AEON FLUX
5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
6 PINK PANTHER
7 GOAL

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 NEW WORLD
2 PINK PANTHER
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
5 FUN with DICK and JANE
6 FIREWALL
7 CLOSE TO YOU
8 WALK THE LINE

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3228-30

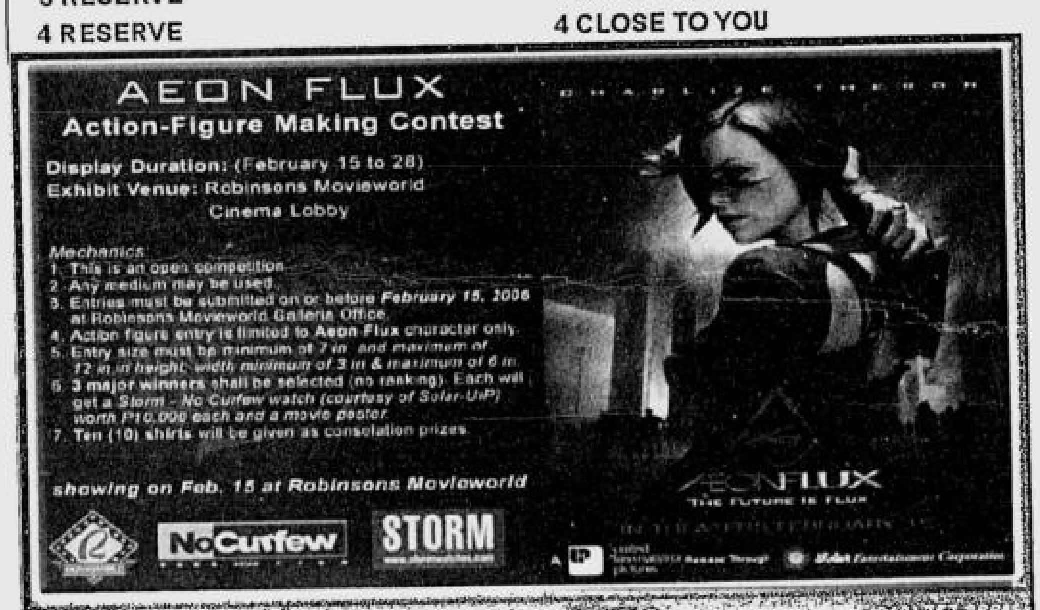
1 PINK PANTHER
2 FUN with DICK and JANE
3 FIREWALL
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 GOAL
6 CLOSE TO YOU
7 AEON FLUX

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-6378

1 PINK PANTHER
2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
3 AEON FLUX
4 CLOSE TO YOU



AEON FLUX

Action-Figure Making Contest

Display Duration: (February 15 to 28)
Exhibit Venue: Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Lobby

Mechanics
1. This is an open competition.
2. Any medium may be used.
3. Entries must be submitted on or before February 15, 2006 at Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Office.
4. Action figure entry is limited to Aeon Flux character only.
5. Entry size must be minimum of 7 in. and maximum of 12 in in height; width minimum of 3 in & maximum of 6 in.
6. 3 major winners shall be selected (no ranking). Each will get a Storm - No Curfew watch (courtesy of Solar-UIP) worth P10,000 each and a movie poster.
7. Ten (10) shirts will be given as consolation prizes.

showing on Feb. 15 at Robinsons Movieworld

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0807

1 PINK PANTHER
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 SAW 2
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 UNDERWORLD 2

LIPA (043) 757-3564 (043) 312-5870

1 PINK PANTHER
2 WALK THE LINE
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 SAW 2

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 PINK PANTHER
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 WALK THE LINE
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 UNDERWORLD 2

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 FUN with DICK and JANE
3 PINK PANTHER
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8168

1 PINK PANTHER
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 MUNICH
5 FIREWALL
6 CLOSE TO YOU

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 FUN with DICK and JANE
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 PINK PANTHER
6 FIREWALL

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 PINK PANTHER
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 SAW 2
4 FUN with DICK and JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 BLOODRAYNE

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 PINK PANTHER
6 SAW 2

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movietime

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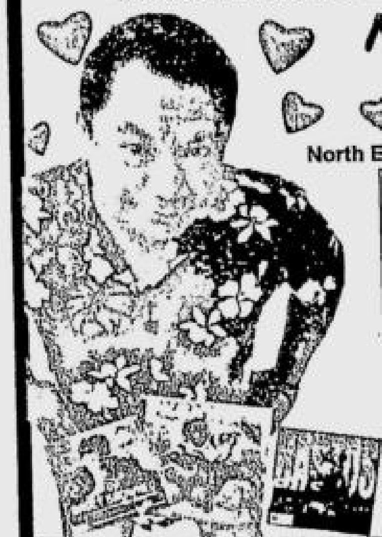
CENTER Stage

LIVE-LARGE

831-1000 loc. 2871, 2873, 2882, 2891

BIG MOVIES • BIG SHOWS • BIG EVENTS



CENTER Stage PEPSI Lipton Lipton Green fly wear

My Funny Valentine!

The Comedy of REX NAVARRETE
SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 10
February 14, 2006, 8:00 PM
North Edsa Cinema 1 February 24 • Southmall Cinema 3 February 25

ERRATUM: We would like to apologize for the inconvenience, we are moving the Feb 17 North Edsa show to Feb 24 and Feb. 18 Southmall show to Feb. 25. This is to accommodate more people who would like to watch Rex Navarrete. Those who bought the ticket to the Feb 17 and 18 shows will be given FREE popcorn upon presentation of his/her ticket on Feb 24 and 25. Thank you very much for your understanding.

Free LOWER BOX TICKET for every purchase of
1(one) Rex CD + med. Popcorn & Drink! P 500.00
Free UPPER BOX TICKET for every purchase of
1 (one) med. Popcorn & Drink for P 300.00
Available at the following SM Cinema Snackbars:
Megamall, North Edsa, Southmall, and Baguio

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

WE CHEERED FOR PACQUIAO, NOW LET US CHEER FOR VILORIA!

BIG SCREEN! NO COMMERCIALS!

BRIAN VILORIA
"THE HAWAIIAN PUNCH"
WBC LIGHT FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION
VS
JOSE AGUIRRE
"EL JAGUAR"

February 19, Sunday
8:00 a.m.
LIVE VIA SATELLITE
Las Vegas USA

LIVE-LARGE SM CINEMA

REAL WARRIORS

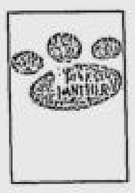
Watch the Hawaiian Punch defend his WBC title at the following SM cinemas:

Fairview 4176811 • North Edsa 9244274 • Southmall 8066888 • Megamall 6331901
Manila 5239240 Pampanga (045) 9637681 Cebu (032) 2313876 • Davao (082) 2976998
Iloilo (033) 3209422 Sta. Mesa 7161416 San Lazaro 7862488 • Valenzuela 2933917
Molino (046) 5026487 • Baguio (074) 6197838-39-41

movietime SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

• CLOSE TO YOU •

• AEON FLUX •



• THE PINK PANTHER •

• GOAL •

SM presents

Nina Beyond Limits live in concert

with special guest
JED MADELA
"Grand Champion Performer of the World 2005"

February 25, 2006
Saturday • 7:00 pm
SM Pampanga Amphitheater

SM CINEMA CENTER Stage

Tickets available at

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TICKETNET SM DEPARTMENT STORES CALL 911-5555 www.ticketnet.com.ph

Pampanga Jenra Mall (045) 3235716 • Robinsons Star Mills (045) 8750770 • Angeles (045) 3234143 Savers Mall (045) 8921274 / (045) 3234537 • Guagua (045) 9002450 • CSEZ Duty Free (045) 5992814 Dau (045) 3312442 • Nepo Mall (045) 8871079 San Fernando Bayan (045) 9615034 / (045) 9615939 Dau Bus Terminal (045) 3311688 Dolores Junction (045) 9612641 / (045) 8600902

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GUARANTEED SEATS

THE PODIUM 633-8976

1 PINK PANTHER
02:15FS / 02:45 MF / 04:50 / 06:55
08:30 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:35 END

2 FIREWALL
02:15FS / 02:45 MF / 04:50 / 06:55
08:30 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:35 END

MEGAMALL

1 FIREWALL
10:40 FS / 11:00 MF / 01:10 / 03:20 / 05:30
07:40 / 09:30 LFS / 09:50 LMF / 11:40 END

CEBU (032) 231-3876

1 FIREWALL
12:00 FS / 12:18 MF / 02:36 / 04:54 / 07:12
09:05 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:25 END

2 PINK PANTHER
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30 / 07:30
09:10 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:10 END

3 MUNICH
12:00 FS / 12:15 MF / 03:20 / 06:25
09:10 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 12:15 END

movietime

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 FIREWALL
2 GOAL
3 AEON FLUX
4 BLOODRAYNE
5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
6 PINK PANTHER
7 SAW 2
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 NEW WORLD
11 SAW 2
12 MUNICH

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AEON FLUX
2 GOAL
3 PINK PANTHER
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
7 FIREWALL
8 UNDERWORLD 2
9 NEW WORLD
10 SAW 2

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 AEON FLUX
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 PINK PANTHER
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 MUNICH
4 NEW WORLD

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 NEW WORLD
2 SAW 2
3 FIREWALL
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 GOAL
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
7 AEON FLUX
8 PINK PANTHER
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11 UNDERWORLD 2
12 MUNICH

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 AEON FLUX
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 PINK PANTHER
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 FIREWALL
6 GOAL
7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
8 NEW WORLD
9 SAW 2
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 AEON FLUX
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 AEON FLUX
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 GOAL
6 NEW WORLD
7 PINK PANTHER
8 FIREWALL

SM CITY MANILA
1 GOAL
2 NEW WORLD
3 SAW 2
4 AEON FLUX
5 PINK PANTHER
6 FIREWALL
7 FIREWALL
8 BLOODRAYNE
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11 UNDERWORLD 2
12 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 AEON FLUX
2 GOAL
3 PINK PANTHER
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 PINK PANTHER
2 MUNICH
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 GOAL
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 PINK PANTHER
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 MUNICH
2 NEW WORLD
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY [illegible]
1 GOAL
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 MUNICH
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FIREWALL
6 CLOSE TO YOU
7 NEW WORLD
8 PINK PANTHER

SM CITY MARILAO
1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 MUNICH

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER

SM CITY LUCENA
1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 BLOODRAYNE
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 DERAILED

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 WALK THE LINE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 PINK PANTHER
3 FIREWALL
4 MUNICH
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 BLOODRAYNE
7 CLOSE TO YOU
8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY ILOILO
1 SAW 2
2 RESERVED
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 UNDERWORLD 2
7 RESERVED
8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 PINK PANTHER
3 SAW 2
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Undeputed champion and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

> Was the champ 'outstanding in academics even as a young student?'

HOST: WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST WISH FOR yourself this year?

Guest: That I can find time despite my busy schedule to take a week off and go to the province, so I can visit my town home!

(*Ay, baliktad yata!*)

* * *

Host: Were you outstanding in academics even as a young student?

Guest: You might say that. For example, in our school's weekly spelling contest, I became undeputed champion for weeks!

(What in the world is an "undeputed" champion?)

* * *

Host: What is a special attraction of your city?

Guest: Proudly, we have one of the longest doll factories in the country!

(That long, huh?)

* * *

Host: Do you want to have many children?

Guest: I do. I had a happy childhood, so *hindi ako takot magkaroon ng malaking anak!*

(*Maraming anak? Malaking anak?* Make up your mind!)

* * *

Host: What do you have to say to your predecessor?

Guest: He should leave our office with his hands clean. He should account for all of the costs that his controversial projects have occurred!

(Occurred? Accrued? Incurred? *Ano ba talaga, kuya?*)

* * *

Host: What do you want to say to your best friend on her birthday?

Guest: I want to say: *Sana hindi lahat ng tao, gaya mo!*

(So much for best friends!)

* * *

Host: Tell us more about yourself.

Guest: For example, what were your parents?

(Humans, we hope!)

* * *

Host: How successful was your group's exhibit?

Guest: Well, I notice them that they like the pictures!

(Well, duh …)

* * *

Host: Where did you study abroad?

Guest: In Beijing, Germany.

(—As opposed to Berlin, China?)

* * *

Host: What do you think of your costar?

Guest: He's so good—when it comes to acting experience, I take my hat to him!

(And, what does he do with it?)

* * *

Host: Why did you decide to play a villain in your latest role on TV?

Guest: Frankly, playing leading men too long can be boring. I'm out to prove that I'm not just more than a pretty face!

(Ah, please repeat?)

* * *

Host: How did you feel during your first sexy pictorial?

Guest: Ok *lang, trabaho lang*.

Host: But wasn't it nerve-wracking wearing only beef?

(Don't answer that, please?)

DID YOU KNOW...

SOME of the pieces worn by **Juris** of MYMP at the pop group's recently concluded concert ("MYMP's Best—The Repeat") at the Araneta Concert were gifts from TV host and MYMP fan **Kris Aquino**.

SHANG CINEPLEX

① PINK PANTHER
MTRCB. GP

② AEON FLUX
MTRCB. R-13

③ EIGA SAI 2006
2:00, 5:00, 8:00

④ BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
MTRCB. R-18

PREMIERE THEATRE GOAL
MTRCB GP

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

Get a 10% discount coupon for a Geisha Pampering Scrub
from Urban Spa when you buy your
"Memoirs of a Geisha" tickets in advance
See posters for details
Promo period: Feb. 09-22, 2006 Per DTI-NCR
Permit No. A3-0139 Series of 2006

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633-4736 for more details

Shangri-La Plaza

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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN R-18
2 PINK PANTHER GP
3 AEON FLUX R-13
4 GOAL

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

GOAL GP	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN R18	AEON FLUX R13
FIREWALL PG13	CLOSE TO YOU GP	PINK PANTHER GP

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE: FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41

ARANETA CENTER
Gateway Ali MALL FarmersPlaza

THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY
Gateway CiNEPLEx*10
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

CLOSE TO YOU	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50	PINK PANTHER 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
THE NEW WORLD 12:30 / 3:20	GOAL 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	AEON FLUX 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 12:40 / 3:30 / 6:20 / 9:10
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	MUNICH 6:10 / 9:20	FIREWALL FUN WITH DICK & JANE	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

Ali MALL CINEMAS

1 CLOSE TO YOU	2 AEON FLUX 12:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 12:10 R3 / 2:20 / 5:15 / 8:05
4 PINK PANTHER 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40	5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:15 R4 / 1:20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

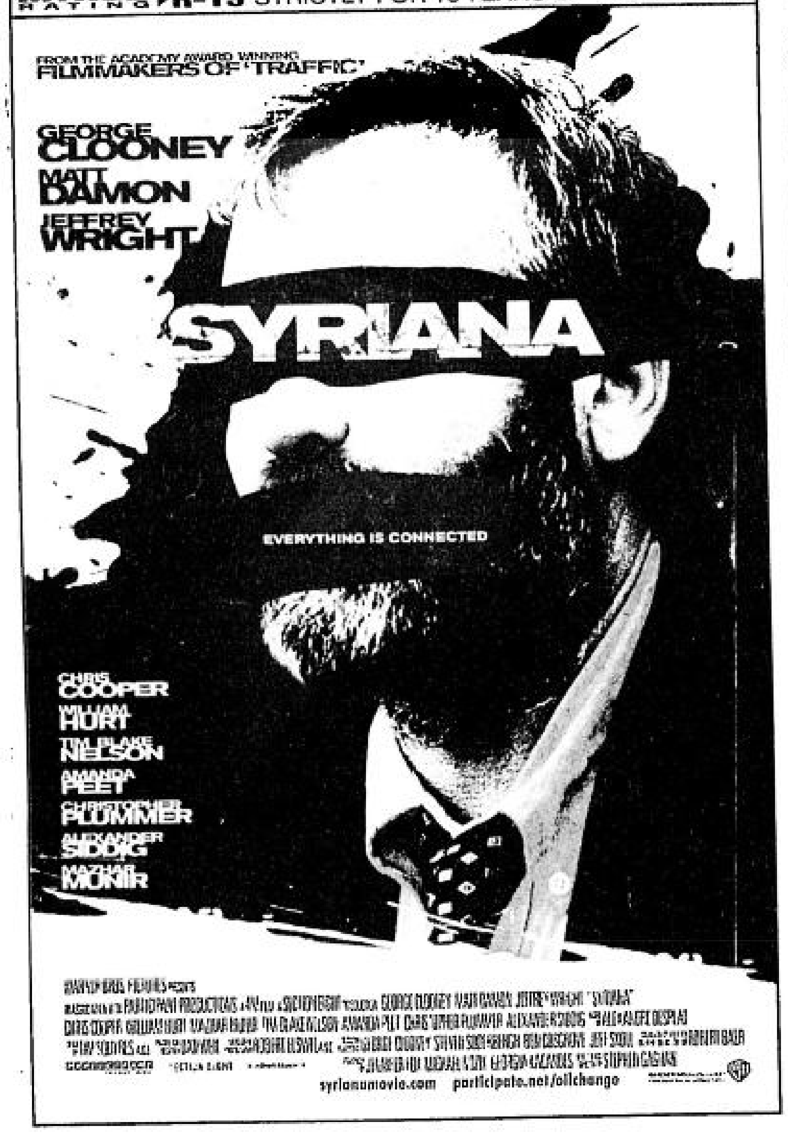
For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

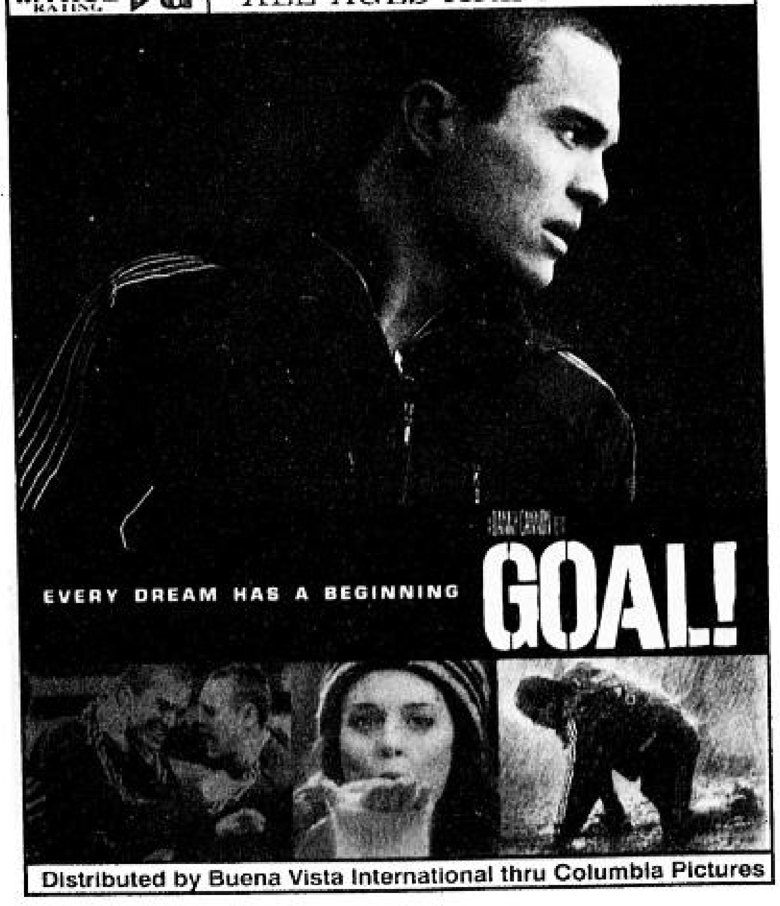
PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
FEB.15 Wed. 7:30 pm PUREFOODS vs RED BULL

WWE RAW LIVE TOUR
FEB.24 FRI 6 pm & FEB. 25 SAT 4 pm

OPENS FEBRUARY 22!
MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP


FROM THE ACADEMY AWARD WINNING FILMMAKERS OF 'TRAFFIC'
GEORGE CLOONEY
MATT DAMON
JEFFREY WRIGHT
SYRIANA
EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED
CHRIS COOPER
WILLIAM HURT
TIM BLAKE NELSON
AMANDA PEET
CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER
ALEXANDER SIDDIG
MAZHAR MUNIR
syrianamovie.com participate.net/oilchange

OPENS TODAY!
MTRCB RATING G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED


EVERY DREAM HAS A BEGINNING
GOAL!

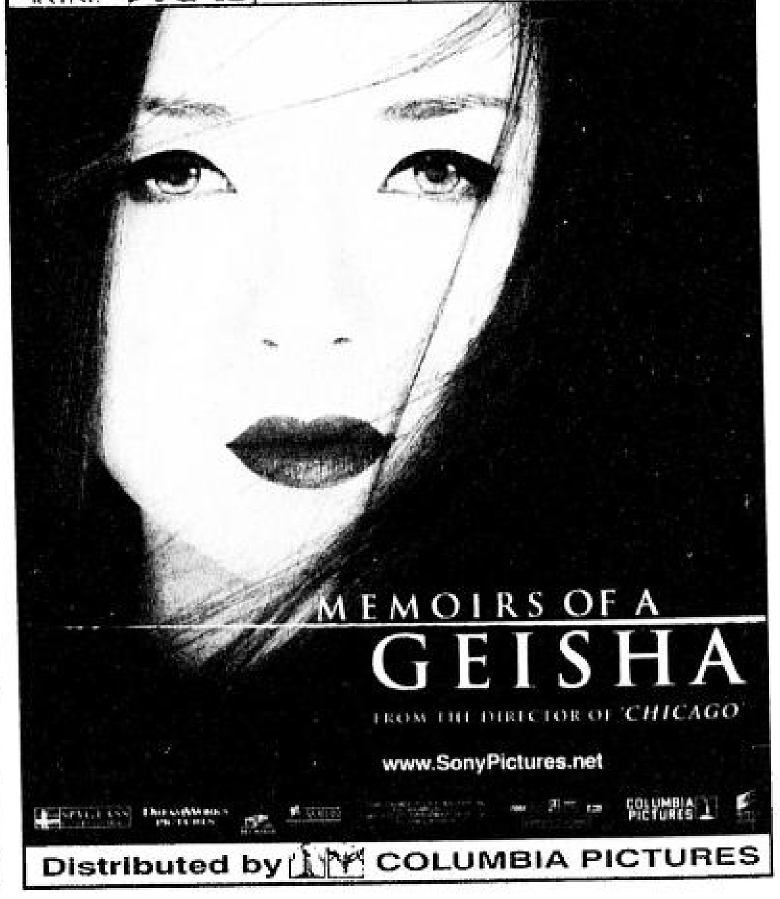
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

2ND RIB-TICKLING FUN WEEK!
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

Jim Carrey
Téa Leoni
Fun with Dick and Jane

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

6 OSCAR NOMINATIONS!
THE LOVE STORY BEGINS FEB.22
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult


MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'CHICAGO'
www.SonyPictures.net

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

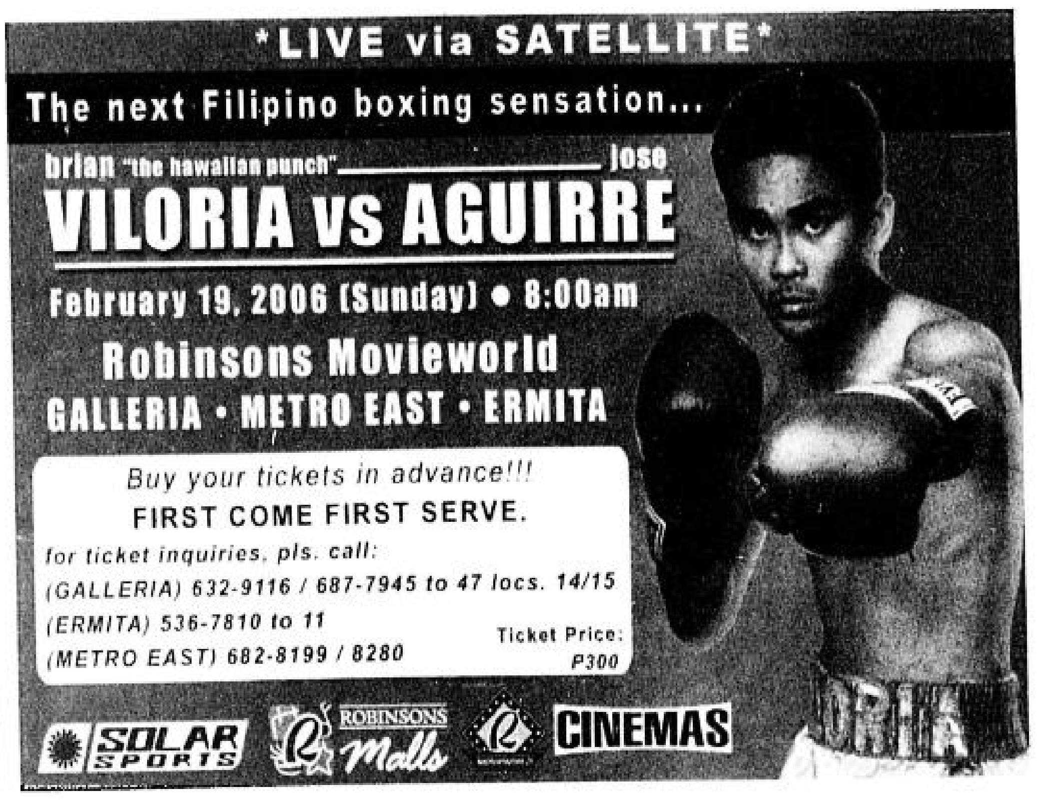
BRUCE WILLIS
MOS DEF DAVID MORSE
For a New York cop and his witness, the distance between life and death just got very short.
1 WITNESS... 118 MINUTES...
16 BLOCKS
SOON IN THEATERS
Distributed by Solar Entertainment Corporation

OPENING TODAY

From page A2-6

possibly, a lucrative franchise), this "sports underdog" story has a "poor Mexican-American immigrant" (Becker) as its hero. A naturally gifted soccer player, he's discovered by a British talent scout who helps him get in the Newcastle United, England's premier soccer club. Rich Cline of Shadows on the Wall thinks it's "a romanticized ode to unrealistic dreams . . . Just a bit more invention and creativity could have made this a true winner." Joe Utichi of Film Focus points out that at least "[it] gets its football very, very right. The action is swift, the atmosphere is perfect . . . The story doesn't fare so well. We've seen the rags-to-riches tale a thousand times . . ."

"STEVEN SPIELBERG'S BOLDEST FEAT YET."
TIME MAGAZINE
R-13
5 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS
INCLUDING
BEST PICTURE
BEST DIRECTOR * BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
BEST FILM EDITING * BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM
MUNICH
STARRING ERIC BANA
www.munichmovie.com
NOW SHOWING
THE WORLD WAS WATCHING IN 1972 AS 11 ISRAELI ATHLETES WERE MURDERED AT THE MUNICH OLYMPICS.
THIS IS THE STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.
UNIVERSAL · DREAMWORKS PICTURES · Solar Entertainment Corporation


LIVE via SATELLITE
The next Filipino boxing sensation...
brian "the hawaiian punch" — jose
VILORIA vs AGUIRRE
February 19, 2006 (Sunday) • 8:00am
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FIRST COME FIRST SERVE.
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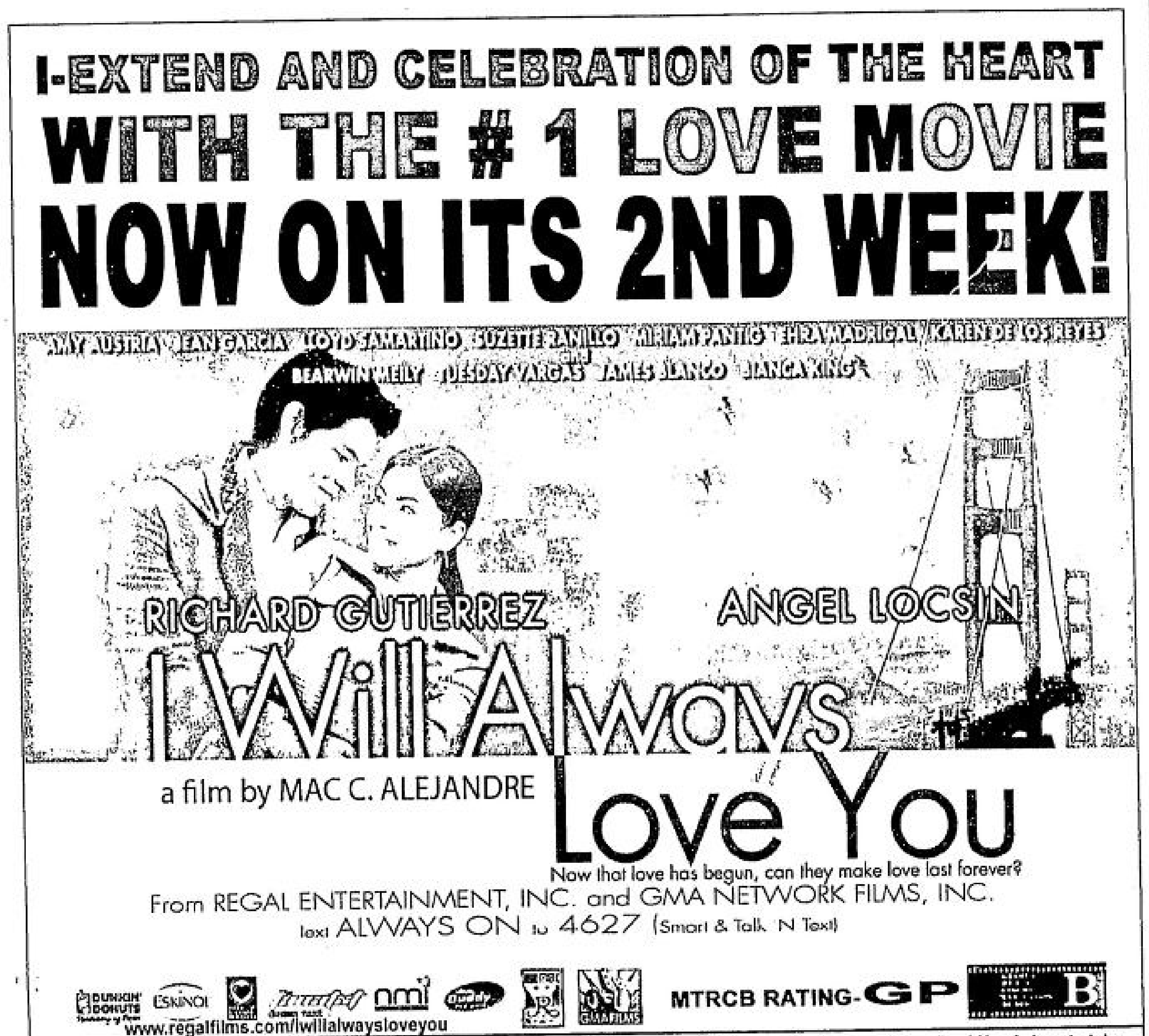
(ERMITA) 536-7810 to 11
(METRO EAST) 682-8199 / 8280
Ticket Price: P300
SOLAR SPORTS · ROBINSONS Malls · CINEMAS


I-EXTEND AND CELEBRATION OF THE HEART
WITH THE # 1 LOVE MOVIE
NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK!
AMY AUSTRIA · JEAN GARCIA · LLOYD SAMARTINO · SUZETTE RANILLO · MIRIAM PANTIG · EHRA MADRIGAL · KAREN DE LOS REYES and BEARWIN MEILY · TUESDAY VARGAS · JAMES BLANCO · BIANCA KING
RICHARD GUTIERREZ · ANGEL LOCSIN
I Will Always Love You
a film by MAC C. ALEJANDRE
Now that love has begun, can they make love last forever?
From REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and GMA NETWORK FILMS, INC.
text ALWAYS ON to 4627 (Smart & Talk N Text)
www.regalfilms.com/iwillalwaysloveyou
MTRCB RATING-GP · B

Watch "I Will Always Love You" and get a chance to win P100,000 cash, a trip to Hong Kong, and other amazing prizes! Here's how to join:

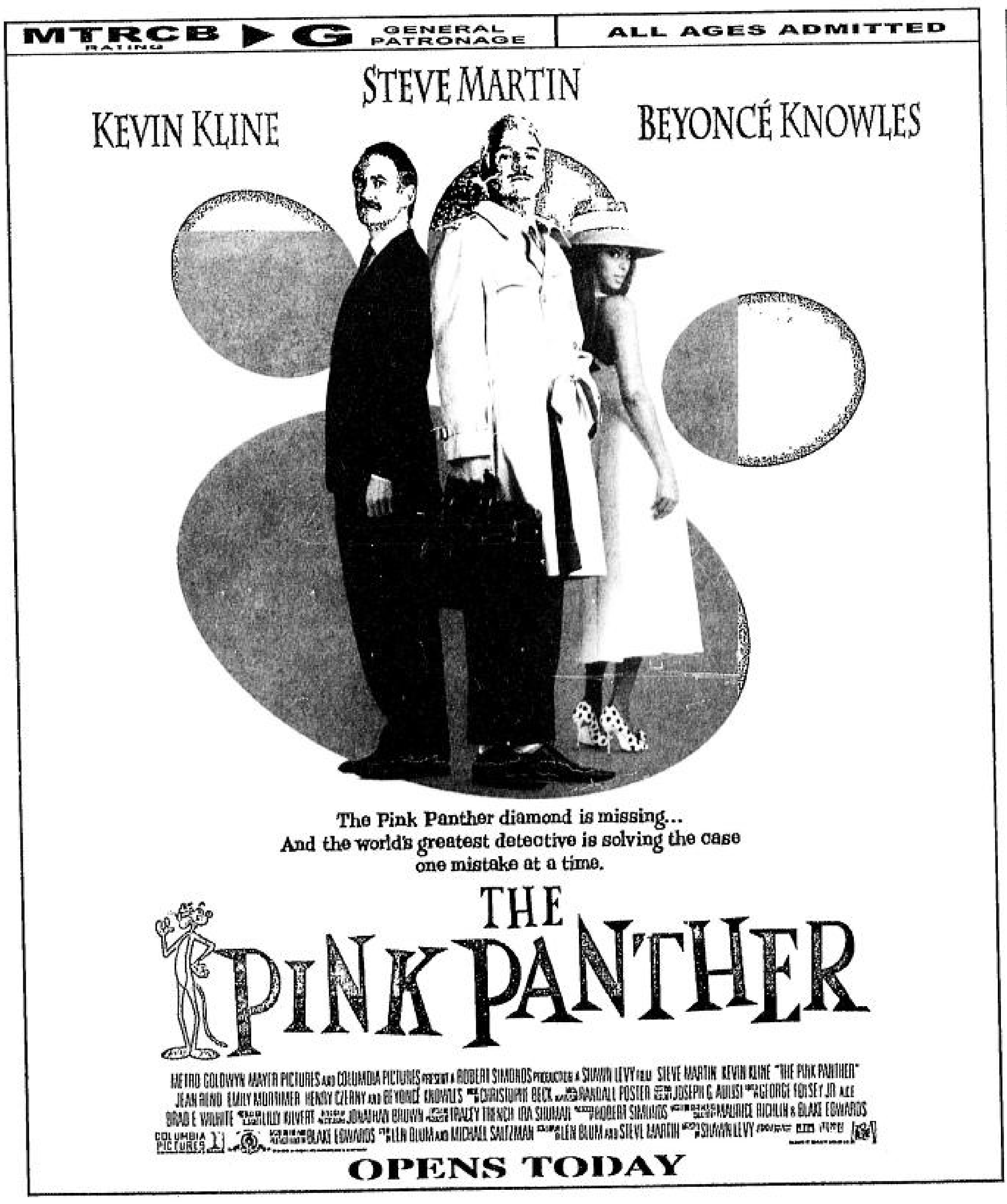
1. Every purchase of one (1) I Will Always Love You movie ticket in all participating cinemas from February 10 to 19, 2006 entitles you to one (1) raffle ticket.
2. Fill up the coupon with your name, address, telephone number and signature and drop in drop boxes located at the theater lobby.
3. Raffle tickets must be dropped in drop boxes on or before February 19, 2006.
4. Grand Draw will be held on February 23, 2006 at Eat Bulaga between 1:30-2:30PM. All entries will be consolidated at Eat Bulaga, Broadway Centrum where up for grabs are the following:
One (1) Grand Prize winner - PhP 100,000.00 cash

Other prizes:
Three (3) winners of roundtrip tickets to Hong Kong Disneyland for two for four days-three nights
Five (5) winners of Sanyo ST-21G1 53.34 cm (21") TV sets
Five (5) winners of Sanyo SR-S63DW 0.18cum (6 cu. Ft.) refrigerators Direct Cool
Five (5) winners of American Heritage AHMO-2032 microwave ovens
Five (5) winners of American Heritage AHWD-93 water dispensers
Five (5) winners of iPod Shuffle 512 MB M-9724ZP/A
Ten (10) winners of Orange DVD players
Ten (10) winners of Nokia 1100
Four (4) winners of M2923B 50.8cm (20") Easy Rider bicycles
Three (3) winners of American Home AWT-631P washing machines w/ dryer
Two (2) La Germania SL530-00W gas ranges

5. Winners can only win once. In the event that a name is picked more than once, he/she will get the price of higher value.
6. Winners will be contacted by phone and/or registered mail.
7. Present the winning raffle claim stub and one (1) valid ID when claiming the prizes.
8. Prizes should be claimed at the Regal Entertainment, Inc. office at #38 Valencia St. Quezon City beginning February 24, 2006. The winner must claim his prize within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification. Failure to claim within the allotted time duration forfeits the winner's right over the prize with prior DTI approval.
9. NMI shall contact winners outside Metro Manila and let them choose whether they want to receive their prize via courier or claim it at the Regal Office. Winners shall shoulder all shipping costs.
10. All employees of GMA Network Inc., GMA New Media Inc., Regal Entertainment, Inc., participating cinemas and their relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are disqualified from joining.

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 0883, series of 2006

A SPECIAL VALENTINE'S DAY PRESENTATION
NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
THE STARS OF "ALEXANDER" & "BATMAN BEGINS" TOGETHER IN ONE GIANT EPIC FROM ACCLAIMED DIRECTOR TERRENCE MALICK.
"ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR!" ---Ruben Nepales Phil. Daily Inquirer
"The BEST HISTORICAL EPIC ROMANCE since TITANIC! ...One of the BEST Movies of the Year!" ---Ebert & Roeper Chicago Sun-Times
"MAGNIFICENT!" ---Merle Wallace NEWSWEEK
COLIN FARRELL as Capt. John Smith
CHRISTIAN BALE as John Rolfe
Q'ORIANKA KILCHER as Pocahontas
A War of Worlds. A Forbidden Love. A Shared Destiny.
The NEW WORLD
BASED ON A TRUE STORY


MTRCB RATING ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE | ALL AGES ADMITTED
STEVE MARTIN
KEVIN KLINE
BEYONCÉ KNOWLES
The Pink Panther diamond is missing...
And the world's greatest detective is solving the case one mistake at a time.
THE PINK PANTHER
OPENS TODAY

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
HARRISON FORD
PAUL BETTANY
NOTHING IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN A MAN WITH EVERYTHING TO LOSE.
FIREWALL

MTRCB RATING G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED

THE MOMMA OF ALL COMEDIES IS BACK.
FBI

OPENS FEBRUARY 22

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GREENHILLS
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1 AEONFLUX R13
2 GOAL GP
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND·EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

3 FIREWALL/ CLOSE TO YOU PG13
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN R18
5 PINK PANTHER GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

February 15, 2006	CANDY PANGILINAN	8:00PM
FEBRUARY 17,2006	BAMBOO	8:00PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

TEATRINO NOW OPEN NIGHTLY
FOR INQUIRIES CALL
722-4532 LOC 116

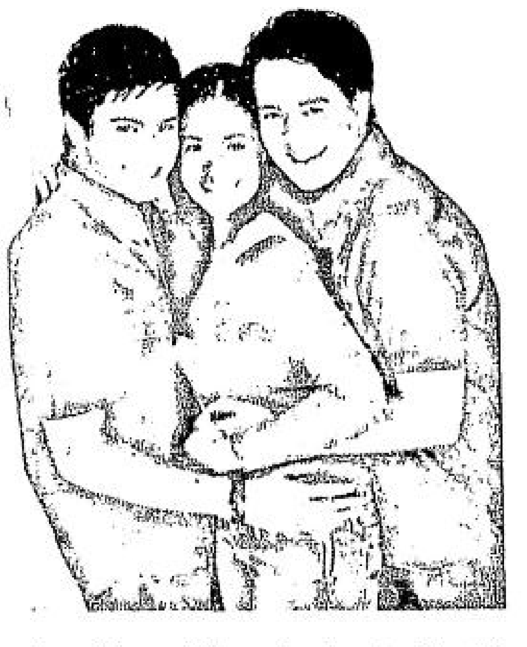
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

OPENING TODAY

Close to You

Stars John Lloyd Cruz, Bea Alonzo, Sam Milby

Directed by Cathy Garcia Molina

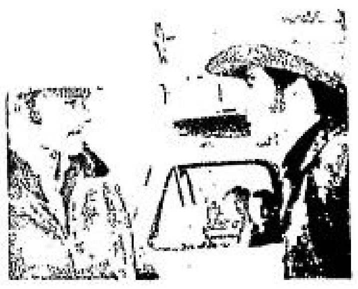


In Star Cinema's second film for this year, Cruz and Alonzo play best friends. Unknown to the girl, her bosom buddy is in love with her. He feels threatened when another childhood friend enters the picture—a Fil-Am band vocalist (Milby). Drumbeaters call this "an irresistible romantic triangle" and claim that the Cruz-Alonzo love team is revitalized by the fact that the pair is put in "amusing situations" in this new film supported by a leading toothpaste company. As a bonus, Milby is making his big-screen debut in this Valentine presentation. To those who've just emerged from a cave, he was a product of "Pinoy Big Brother's" first season.

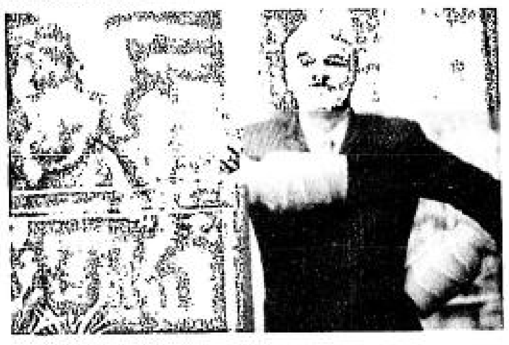
Brokeback Mountain

Stars Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Michelle Williams, Anne Hathaway

Directed by Ang Lee



An award winner in Venice and the Golden Globes and, now, a front-runner in the Oscars derby, this "sweeping romance" has been hailed by critics as "groundbreaking" because it dares to chronicle a 20-year affair between two men, and married cowboys (Ledger and Gyllenhaal) at that. It is based on a short story written by Annie Proulx (Pulitzer winner for "The Shipping News") and included in the prestigious O. Henry anthology in 1997. The titular mountain serves as the pair's "love nest, a reckoning place . . . an island of denial." Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun-Times raves: "Lee is a director whose films are set in many nations and many times. What they have in common is an instinctive sympathy for the characters . . . [He] respects the entire arc of the story, right down to the lonely conclusion. [The] closing scene . . . is heartbreaking in what is said, and not said, about their world." It's a love, according to Stephen Holden of the New York Times, that is "stumbled into, thwarted and held sorrowfully in the heart."



The Pink Panther

Stars Steve Martin, Kevin Kline, Beyoncé Knowles

Directed by Shawn Levy

Martin takes over the Inspector Jacques Closeau role made immortal by Peter Sellers. The bumbling French cop is assigned to investigate the murder of a world-famous soccer coach and recover a stunning diamond ring called the "Pink Panther." Hilarity ensues as Closeau closes in on the criminal. Brian Lowry of Variety says, "It's neither [a] disaster . . . nor a fully realized madcap farce . . . a feature-length 'Saturday Night Live' sketch." Michael Rechtshaffen of the Hollywood Reporter thinks "there's a stale, warmed-over feel to the entire production . . . [it] fails to generate the necessary comic sparks. Too many gags fall flat on their face long before the inspector does and the entire pace feels like it's on some sort of three-second delay."

Aeon Flux

Stars Charlize Theron, Frances McDormand, Pete Postlethwaite

Directed by Karyn Kusama

Based on a trippy MTV animated series, this girl-power flick is set in the year 2415, four years after a deadly virus wiped out 99 percent of humanity. The surviving one percent relocates to the "pristine walled-in city of Bregna—a dubious paradise." Heroine Aeon (Theron) is a Spandex-clad assassin who sides with rebels and attempts to murder Bregna's leader, to avenge her sister's death. Bob Longino of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution complains: "'Aeon Flux' is as enjoyable as acid reflux." Mark Collette of the Tyler Morning Telegraph finds it "entertaining in its own right ... more stylish than 'The Island.'"

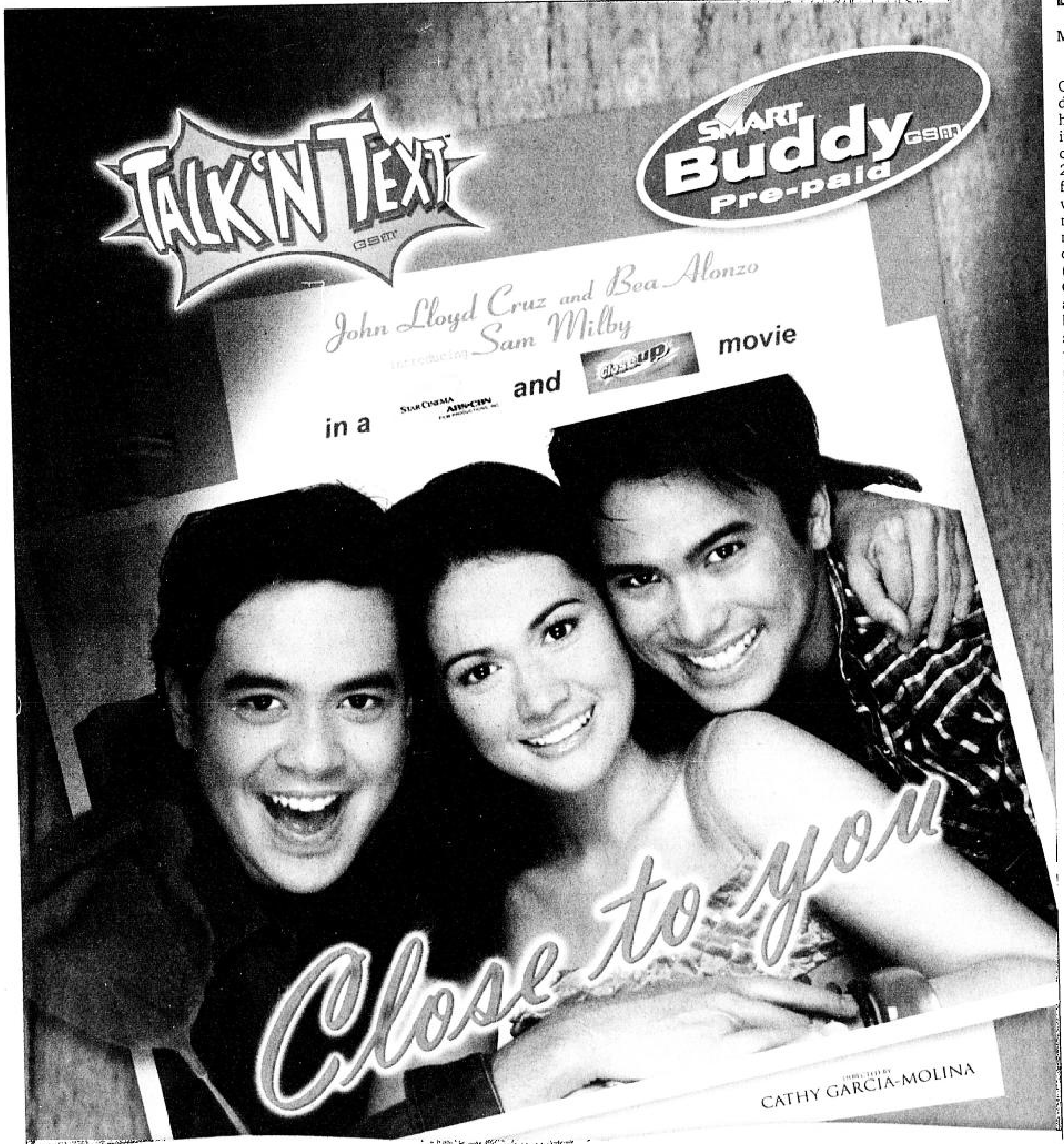
Goal!

Stars Kuno Becker, Stephen Dillane, Anna Friel

Directed by Danny Cannon

Envisioned as the first part of a trilogy (and,

OPENING/ A2-5


TALK 'N TEXT GSM
SMART Buddy GSM Pre-paid
John Lloyd Cruz and Bea Alonzo
introducing Sam Milby
in a STAR CINEMA ABS-CBN FILM PRODUCTIONS, INC. and closeup movie
Close to you
DIRECTED BY CATHY GARCIA-MOLINA

Subscribe na at mag-download sa Close To You service only from Talk 'N Text & Smart Buddy at pwede kang manalo ng P300 load weekly o Nokia 6020 sa grand draw!

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C2UL1 C2UL3 C2UL7 C2UL6 C2UL5

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TITLE	ARTIST	KEYWORD
This I Swear	Sam Milby	swear
Friend Of Mine	MYMP	friend
Closer You And I	Piolo Pascual	closer
Close To You	Sam Milby	c2u

To qualify to join the promo, subscriber should register by texting REG <name, address, age> to 2366.

Text C2U to 2366
to get daily calendar logos with Love Quotes
P2.50/message

Mechanics:

1. To qualify to join the promo, subscriber should register by texting REG <name, address, age> to 2366.
   Ex.
   REG Juan dela Cruz, EDSA QC, 19
2. From all entries earned per week, the raffle will be conducted every Monday starting February 13 to March 6, 2006. All valid entries earned during the entire promo period will be eligible for the Grand Draw on March 6, 2006.
3. Weekly winners will get P300 worth of prepaid load. **Grand draw winners** will get to win a Nokia 6260.

ABS-CBN INTERACTIVE

Promo period is from February 12 to March 6, 2006.
Per DTI-NCR Permit #. 0302, Series of 2006
P15.00 per download. • Also open to SMART subscribers.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2006 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Text us your feedback: inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

B1

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The No.1 Computer Magazine in the Philippines
2004 National Shoppers' Choice Awards

Coco-based exports jumped 14.6% in '05

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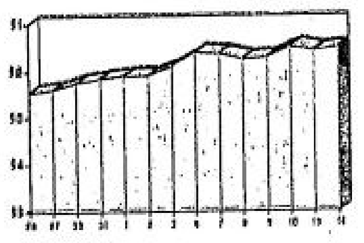


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

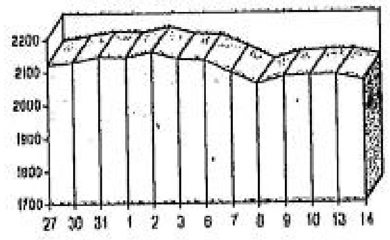
P 51.52 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2006

¥ 117.29 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2006

GOLD: $539.00-539.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 14, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.85 percent lower yesterday, following losses on Wall Street overnight amid a bout of nerves about the outlook for US interest rates, dealers said.

They said weaker regional markets further dampened sentiment as investors waited to hear the first congressional testimony from new US Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke later this week for a lead on monetary policy.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 17.75 points to 2,069.89 after trading between 2,061.52 and 2,087.64. Volume was 1.67 billion shares worth P8.97 billion.

The all-shares index fell 7.10 points to 970.47.

Losers led gainers at 65 to 12, with 52 stocks unchanged.

"The whole of Asia is consolidating after a strong performance in January. It is trying to seek a lower base as most stocks are now historically expensive," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities Inc.

"Even the recent upgrade in our ratings outlook would not trigger investors to aggressively position in the market today," Aguila said, referring to Fitch Ratings' an-

SHARES/ B5

December performance very impressive, says industry group

By Ronnel W. Domingo

EXPORT VOLUMES OF COCONUT-BASED PRODucts went up 14.6 percent in 2005 to 2.05 million metric tons owing to double-digit growth rates in all categories but one, according to an industry report.

The United Coconut Associations of the Philippines said last year's shipments increased from 1.79 million MT in copra terms posted in 2004.

Ucap documents showed that exporters shipped out 1.1 million MT of coconut oil; 419,055 MT of copra meal; 117,728 MT of desiccated coconut, and 122,411 MT copra equivalent of oleochemicals.

The numbers mean that last year, shipments of coconut oil grew by 14.9 percent; copra meal by 15 percent; desiccated coconut by 11 percent and oleochemicals by 15.9 percent.

Ucap added that the country did not export any copra this year but was able to sell 38 MT last year.

Still, the group said the overall growth rate of export volumes was largely on account of coconut oil, which performed well especially in the latter part of the year.

On the other hand, desiccated coconut was the only loser with shipments of 7,207 MT falling behind significantly by 27.2 percent from 9,893 MT. The volume was the smallest delivered in a month during the year.

In December, coconut exports reached 213,636 MT in copra terms or an increase of 97.2 percent from the 103,327 MT shipped out in the same month of 2004.

"(December's) performance was the most impressive during the year when monthly figures were compared with corresponding year-ago levels," Ucap said.

Coconut oil exports increased in December by 120 percent to 120,286 MT from 54,693 MT.

Also, export volumes of oleochemicals went up 87.1 percent

COCO-BASED/ B5

Yield of 10-year bonds slides to 8.957%

By Michelle V. Remo

RENEWED OPTIMISM ON THE GOVERNment's fiscal condition led investors to scramble for the government's 10-year treasury bonds, forcing its rate to drop by 22.5 basis points to 8.957 percent yesterday.

The rate for the 10-year bonds last stood at 9.182 percent during the auction last Jan. 10.

"What's interesting is that with all the affirmation (by credit-rating agencies on the Philippines' improving fiscal standing) the market continues to bring down interest rates," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in press briefing after the auctions.

The market showed strong appetite for the

YIELD/ B5

WHAT'S INSIDE

Asian Spirit fills Laoag void /B5

State bank expects '06 profit to hit P3.4-3.5B /B2

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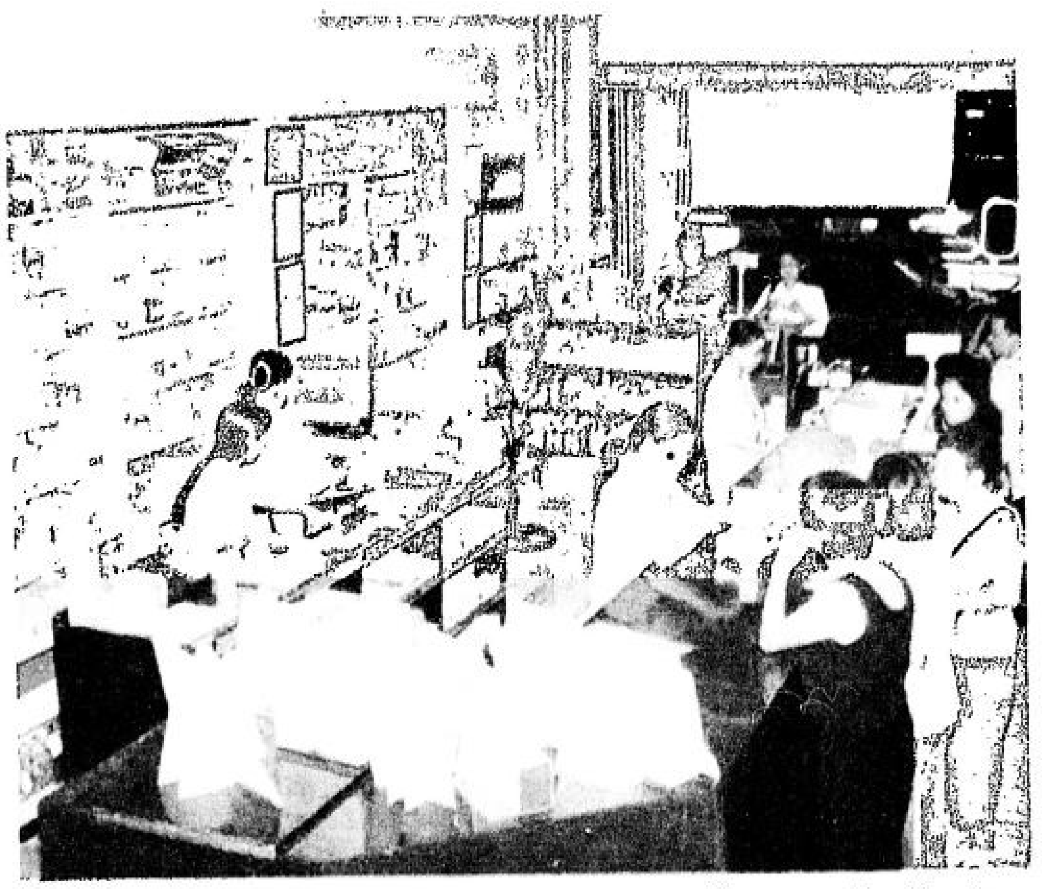


SOME lawmakers, regulators, and industry players are now pushing to amend local laws to help bring down the prices of medicine. PDI PHOTO

Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of healthcare

By Daxim L. Lucas

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

"THE COMMON ASSERTION IS THAT PREscription drugs are costly because drug companies need to recover the high costs of research and development (R&D) that went into their development."

"The industry has used a figure of $800 million as the average cost of bringing a pharmaceutical compound through screening, chemistry, preclinical development and clinical testing."

"It's a fallacy to suggest that [the pharmaceutical industry], or any industry, prices a product to recapture the R&D budget spent in development. Business doesn't work like that. Those are sunk costs. In other words, [pharmaceutical firms] spent the money and it cannot be recovered no matter what [they] decide to do with pricing."

The preceding paragraphs may sound like the comments of an activist raving against the "oppressive" pricing practices of an "abusive" pharmaceutical industry.

Surprisingly, however, these are the very words of Pfizer Inc. chair and CEO Hank McKinnell—a leading light in the global pharmaceutical industry—in his book "A Call to Action: Taking Back Healthcare for Future Generations" published only in May 2005.

Intellectual property vs public health

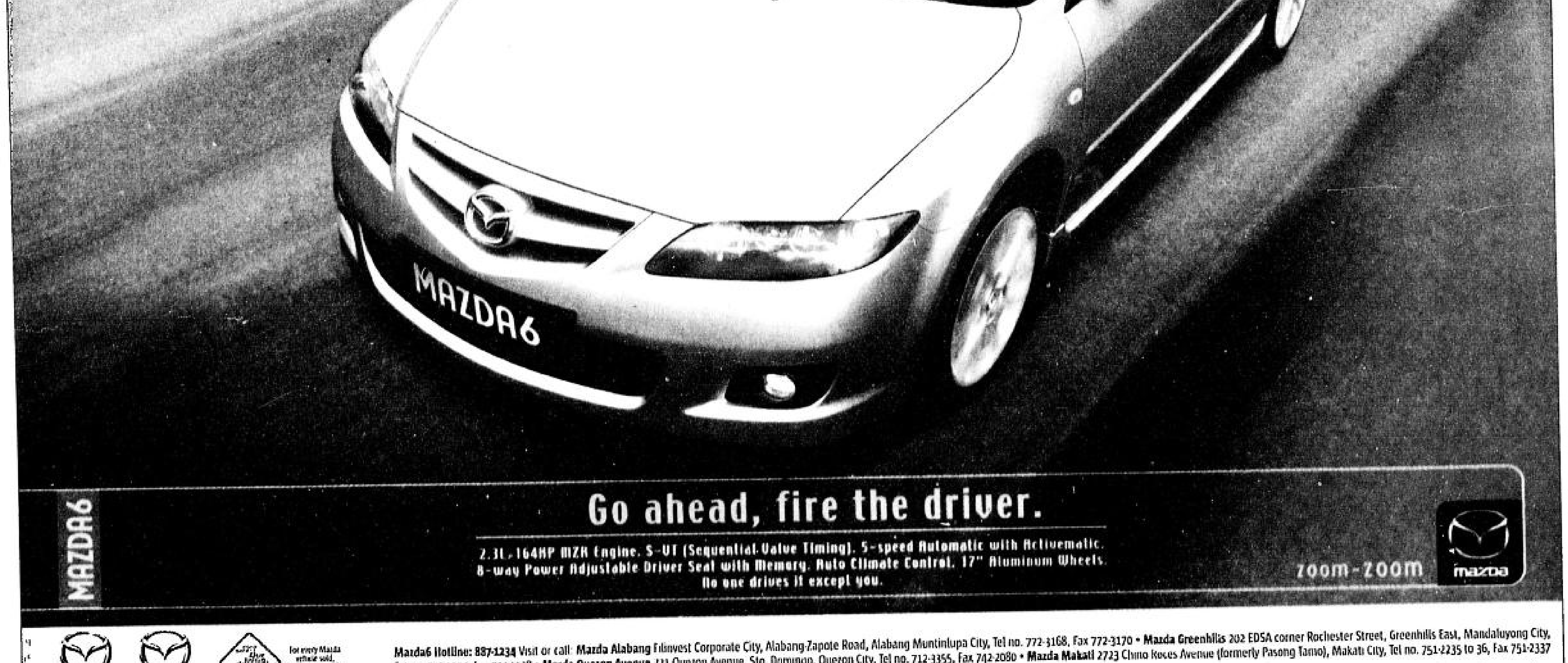
Multinational pharmaceutical firms and their local representatives have always argued that high R&D costs associated with developing medicines justify their high pricing regime.

They argue that the high prices are not predatory in nature, but merely allow the companies' stakeholders to recover the investments they made into developing these life-saving drugs.

On the other hand, advocacy groups critical of the industry argue that pharmaceutical firms are benefiting unduly from the misery of impoverished Filipinos, many of whom pay through the nose for medication that these same firms make available abroad at lower prices.

The debate has pitted the interests of multinational drug firms, which want to protect their intellectual property rights and patents,

DEBATE/ B2



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Gov't raises Customs' revenue collection target for this year

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS INcreased the Bureau of Customs' revenue target for this year to P196 billion from the original goal of P191.5 billion.

The move was a consequence of a recent decision that allowed collecting agencies to include non-cash payments in the computation of their revenue collection.

A source from the Department of Finance, head agency of the BOC, said the original target did not take into account non-cash duty payments that the BOC might collect.

DOF and the Department of Budget and Management officials earlier said that effective this year, the government would already include non-cash duty and tax collections of the BOC and the Bureau of Internal Revenue in the computation of their revenue collections.

The move is intended to make the Philippines' fiscal reporting system consistent with international standards. Finance and budget officials said the accrual system of accounting, which required the inclusion of non-cash collections in the computation of revenues, was recommended by the International Monetary Fund and is practiced by neighboring countries.

The BOC last year collected P154.4 billion, surpassing its P151.2-billion target. Of the amount, P12.746 billion was in the form of non-cash.

The source said the DOF was still studying whether the BIR's target of P675.4 billion for this year should also be increased. The BIR is lobbying for its target to be maintained, saying it was already high.

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State bank expects '06 profit to hit ₱3.4-3.5B

Expanding scope, scale of operations

By Doris C. Dumlao

DAVID

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines will expand both the scope and scale of its lending operations this year to be able to realize P3.4 billion to P3.5 billion in profit.

The bank last year posted a net income of P3.2 billion.

"Priority in the years ahead is to generate scale in all our activities—it's the ability to grow the book. We have to make sure we have adequate scale to remain strategic, relevant and true to our charter. Our developmental side should shift to higher gear this year," DBP president Reynaldo David said in a briefing yesterday.

Lending to local government units, for instance, will remain a key focus with greater emphasis on housing projects, public hospitals, public markets, public schools, bus terminals and LGU computerization programs, he said.

Widening its business cope means making inroads into new areas such as microfinance and small and medium enterprise lending.

In the meantime, DBP got the regulators go-ahead for its plan to raise as much as P10 billion in tier 2 capital.

It recently raised P2.35 billion in fresh funds from the first tranche of a tier 2 capital notes offering.

DBP's profit last year was 41.41 percent better than the year-ago level.

David noted a 15.25-percent rise in gross income at P16.7 billion from P14 billion a year earlier. Gross loan portfolio registered a 31.26 percent rise to reach P111.53 billion, from P84.97 billion in the previous year.

The bank's past due ratio was recorded at 7.43 percent versus the industry's average of 10.25 percent.

Total assets stood at P210.5 billion or 33.98 percent better than a year ago, while net worth also expanded by 15.11 percent to P22.85 billion.

With P54.22 billion in total funds from official development assistance sources, David said the DBP was in position to sustain relevant lending programs that would benefit the domestic economy.

PPA to float ₱2B worth of 7-yr notes

By Clarissa S. Batino

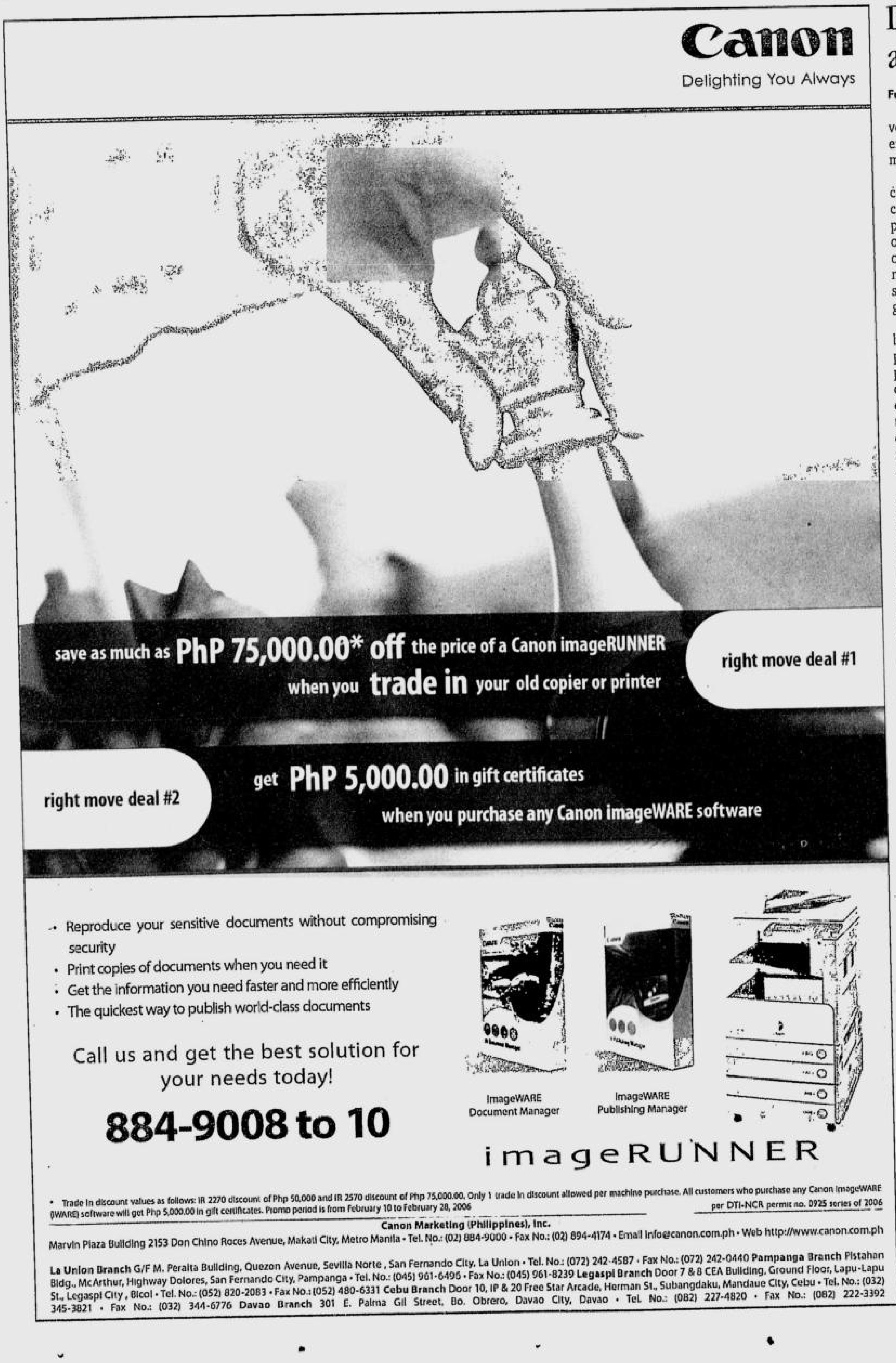
THE PHILIPPINE PORTS AUthority yesterday said it would sell P2 billion worth of seven-year bonds in the second quarter to raise funds for the upgrading of major ports in key provinces.

PPA assistant general manager Aida Dizon said the bond sale was approved by the port regulator's board last week. The borrowing will be handled by Development Bank of the Philippines.

"We still have to sit down with the DBP and the Bureau of Treasury to finalize the terms and the documentation of the fund raising activity," said Dizon, who also heads the PPA's finance group.

The PPA official said the borrowing would incur an interest charge of 1 to 1.5 percentage points above the benchmark treasury bill rate.

The maritime authority said proceeds of the bond sale will finance the upgrade of ports in Cagayan de Oro, Davao, General Santos, Iloilo, Osamis and Zamboanga.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Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of healthcare

From page B1

versus the interests of the broader public, which is clamoring for more affordable healthcare.

At stake is the future of the country's P65-billion pharmaceutical industry, and more importantly, the health of millions of impoverished Filipinos, many of whom can barely afford to make ends meet, much less spend for medication when they get sick.

So far, however, the battle has been one-sided, with local drug prices still among the most expensive in the region, and some claim, in the world—mainly because the local system continues to prioritize the protection of foreign firm's intellectual property rights over making drugs more affordable.

For example, a 500 mg capsule of Ponstan (generic name: mefenamic acid) costs as much as P20.98 in local drugstores. In India and Pakistan, however, where state policies are more egalitarian, the same medication would cost only the equivalent of P2.80 and P1.48 a capsule, respectively.

Government intervention

With this in mind, some lawmakers, regulators, and industry players are now pushing to amend local laws to help bring down the prices of medicine.

Recently, Senate trade and commerce committee chair Manuel A. Roxas II filed Senate Bill No. 2139, which aims to lower drug or medicine prices by amending provisions of the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

Supported by Sen. Juan M. Flavier, the bill has gathered a significant amount of support from local regulators and industry groups, but is being opposed by the influential Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), an umbrella organization dominated by multinational drug makers.

The salient features of the bill include institutionalizing the following:

- Parallel importation—The importation of patented medicines from another country where they are cheaper into the Philippines. At present, the state-owned Philippine International Trading Corp. (PITC) can only import "off patent" medicines from abroad. Even if these are off patent, PITC is still being sued for infringement by foreign pharmaceutical companies.
- Early working doctrine—This will allow local generic drug manufacturers to start studying and testing of generic equivalents of patented drugs before the expiration of the relevant patent. Only commercial manufacturing and selling are prohibited. This principle is applied in the United States and is recognized in Japan, Canada, Israel and Thailand. At present, local generic manufacturers are allowed to start studying, testing, manufacturing and selling of generic equivalents only after a patent has expired. The period of studying and testing alone takes approximately two to three years, and thus, delays the introduction of generic medicines beyond the date when a patent expires.
- Government use—This will create an exception to the application of compulsory licensing rules for cases involving the protection of public health, like outbreaks or epidemics. Based on present laws, compulsory licensing applications take around six to eight years before approval. Hence, any government action is unnecessarily delayed.
- Legal protection for government officials—There is also a need to create a legal indemnity clause for government officials engaged in parallel importation and compulsory licensing for government use. This will ensure appropriate legal cover from harassment suits or temporary restraining orders.

Debate rages

In his book, the head of the world's biggest pharmaceutical firm argues that "sunk costs" like R&D spending are "irrelevant" for drug pricing considerations.

"If we let sunk costs influence our decisions, we would not be evaluating a pricing decision exclusively on the merits of its own business case," Pfizer's McKinnell wrote. "Pricing decisions should be based on future possibilities, not biased by 10-year-old decisions."

While the Pfizer chief justified the pharmaceutical industry's policies, he himself shot holes in the argument most commonly used by drug firms in defending their high prices, even as he stressed that prices need to come down to make health care more affordable.

Proponents of SB 2139—and millions of Filipino consumers—couldn't agree more.

(To be continued)

Investors trade in ₱66.1B in bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

INVESTORS HAVE swapped P66.1 billion worth of old three-year government securities for new Treasury bonds under the government's Debt Consolidation Program.

The Bureau of the Treasury said in a statement that there were P77.6 billion worth of old three-year bonds that investors offered to swap with the newly issued bonds by the deadline set last week, of which P66.1 billion were accepted.

The new three-year Treasury bonds are scheduled to mature in 2009.

The government's debt consolidation program calls for investors holding government securities to exchange their debt paper for new bonds with longer tenors of three, five and seven years.

The program was crafted to enable the government to better manage its domestic debts by stretching the average maturity of its obligations by one year from the current 4.7 years.

"We are signaling to the investor community that we are going to manage our debt actively, and gradually reduce our dependence on foreign debt," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a statement.

Treasurer Omar Cruz said having longer-tenor bonds would help boost the domestic capital market as it would make available a substantial volume of three, five and seven-year government securities with the same maturity dates.

These are securities that foreign investors deem attractive, compared to bonds with shorter maturities.

Credit Suisse First Boston, the financial arranger of the bond exchange, said P500 billion worth of bonds have been issued with an average maturity of three years or less; P293 billion with a maturity of three to five years, and P92 billion with a maturity of five to seven years.

The deadline for the submission of bids for the swap for the new five and seven-year bonds is set for Feb. 24.

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Innova 2.5 G A/T	100,000	85,532	58,900	46,909	33,474	27,010	23,337
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Innova 2.5 G M/T	100,000	79,681	54,871	43,703	31,186	25,164	21,740
Innova 2.0 G M/T	100,000	75,090	51,709	41,187	29,391	23,715	20,487
Innova 2.5 E M/T	100,000	70,949	48,858	38,917	27,771	22,409	19,358
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Robinson Land income increases 28% to ₱419M

ROBINSONS LAND CORPORATION (RLC), the property development unit of the Gokongwei family, reported that its net income rose 28 percent to P419 million from October to December, from the P328 million posted the previous year.

During the first quarter of RLC's fiscal year in 2006, gross revenue also grew 38 percent to P1.72 billion from P1.25 billion.

RLC's fiscal year ends on Sept. 30.

"The strategic initiatives we made across four business units have translated to sustained growth and improved profitability," RLC executive vice-president Frederick C. Go said in a statement.

In its financial report to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), RLC said revenues from its commercial centers accounted for P872 million of total real estate revenues for the first quarter of fiscal year 2006, up from P778.9 million posted in the same period last year.

Its flagship malls—Robinsons Galleria and Robinsons Place Manila—continue to enjoy higher rental income, while new malls Robinsons Place Pioneer and Robinsons Place Angeles and the redeveloped Robinsons Place Novaliches are also contributing significantly to rental growth.

RLC high-rise buildings division's revenue grew by 84 percent to P526.7 million in the quarter ending December, from P286.3 million last year.

Its hotel division also posted gross revenues of P219.3 million for the first quarter compared to last year's P116.8 million due to the opening of Crown Plaza Hotel. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

In aggressive Asia thrust, URC ups acquisition ante

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TO POWER ITS ASIAN EXPANSION, Universal Robina Corp. (URC) has raised $90 million from the sale of shares to both foreign and local investors.

The food and beverage arm of tycoon John Gokongwei is now actively scouting for acquisition targets in the snack food line in southeast Asia.

According to URC president Lance Gokongwei, the firm plans to spend P3.4 billion, representing a portion of its net proceeds from the share offering, to fund the expansion of its beverage line in Vietnam as well as the acquisition of additional snack lines in China, Asean countries and Vietnam as well.

The cash-rich firm, which has mapped out a bold expansion strategy in Asia, last August acquired a Chinese cereal brand, Aces Foods, which is expected to boost URC's sales in China.

But Gokongwei declined to disclose the acquisition price.

Also last year, it established a new biscuit plant in Thailand, and a candy and snack production facility in Vietnam. It beefed up spending for advertising and promotion for product launches in various international markets.

URC and its major shareholders recently offered a total of 635 million shares at P17 apiece, generating roughly P10.8 billion in proceeds. URC's sole international underwriter, UBS Investment Bank, has a month to execute an option to issue an additional 95.2 million secondary shares.

URC major shareholders JG Summit Holdings, Inc., Express Holdings Inc., and Robinsons Supermarket Corporation also raised some P5.5 billion from the sale of 325 million secondary shares. Should URC's greenshoe option push through, this can raise an additional P1.6 billion for major shareholders.

Gokongwei said the JG Summit Group will use part of the proceeds to pay short-term debts.

URC earlier said demand was in excess of its offered amount, reflecting hefty investor appetite for its shares.

Its shares, which resumed trading yesterday, closed at P18—50 centavos lower than its previous close of P18.50 on Feb. 6. URC shares were suspended from Feb. 7-14 to avoid price distortions, arising from the price setting process.

Aside from China, URC has operations in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Vietnam.

Smart launches 3G services in key cities

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART COMMUNICATIONS INC. yesterday launched a program offering free third-generation, or 3G mobile, services in key cities covered by more than 100 cell sites nationwide.

"We can now say we are the first to offer the public the most awaited innovation in mobile [services]," said Smart head of wireless consumer division Butch Jimenez. "Now every [other mobile carrier] will just have to follow our lead."

3G allows video calls, video streaming and high-speed Internet access. For now, Smart's video calls are limited within network, but short films are readily available for streaming.

Smart and fierce rival Globe Telecom Inc., Jimenez said, had been battling it out to win the bragging rights as to who would first offer 3G services.

"Today, we are throwing the knockout punch," Jimenez said during yesterday's launch of its free 3G trial open to all Smart subscribers with 3G-enabled mobile phones.

Both major operators are set to offer 3G services within the first half of the year, possibly before the end of the first quarter.

Glove, a joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom said it had started to "test drive" 3G with corporate clients Ayala Land, General Milling Corp., Sun Life of Canada, PruLife UK and the Aboitiz Group of Companies.

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Pentium D
inside

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 14, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.3	3.3	18,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35.5	35	35.5	153,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	58.5	57.5	58	973,200
China Banking Corp.	615	615	615	615	600
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	62.5	62.5	61.5	62	137,100
International Exch. Bank	22	22	22	22	36,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32.5	32.5	31.5	32.5	836,700
Philippine National Bank	31	31	30.5	31	2,700
Security Bank Corp.	39	39	39	39	17,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	35	35	34	34.5	17,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.72	70,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3210	3210	3210	3210	90
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2150	2150	2150	2150	190
Ivantage Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	46	46	45	46	3,371,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	43.5	44	43.5	44	53,700
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	7,500
Manila Electric Co. B	20	20	19.75	19.75	453,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	8,186,000
Petron Corp.	4.6	4.65	4.5	4.55	3,012,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	72,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	12,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	21	20.5	20.5	97,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35	35	33.5	34.5	569,000
Pancake House Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	20,000
RFM Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	20,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.72	215,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	61.5	62	61.5	62	107,200
San Miguel Corp. B	83.5	84	83	84	230,500
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18.25	17.75	18	12,132,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	740,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.33	0.35	0.31	0.32	8,380,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	693,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	1,075,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	10,000
CHEMICALS					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	30,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	40,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	50,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	200,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,600,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	29,000,000
Atok-Big Wedge.,Inc. B	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	3,000
Ayala Corp.	325	335	325	335	74,080
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.85	4.8	4.8	184,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.28	2.3	2.28	2.3	968,000
APC Group Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	80,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	9,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.89	0.89	0.88	0.88	300,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	18,874,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	1	0.98	0.98	10,010,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.15	3.05	3.1	596,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.36	1,490,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.5	4.6	2,280,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.23	0.23	210,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	290,000
SM Investments Corp.	222	222	220	220	72,330
South China Resources Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	30,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	100,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	100,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.5	15,714,200
Belle Corp.	1	1.02	1	1	1,110,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	120,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.235	7,450,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.52	919,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	39,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	130,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	30,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	6,880,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	3,000,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.46	1.46	4,029,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	610,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.32	1.32	10,600,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	3,110,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.18	0.195	3,700,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	300,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	54,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.22	0.22	0.2	0.2	5,920,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	86,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.9	8	993,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.135	5,780,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11	11	10.75	10.75	103,400
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.88	1,810,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	745	745	740	745	54,370
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	639,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1735	1735	1725	1730	115,650
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	380,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	5,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	250,000
Philweb Corp.	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	138,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	147,900
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	3,207,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	860,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	3,000
Ipeople Inc.	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	42,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.36	1.36	93,000
Paxys Inc.	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	564,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.02	1.04	1	1	1,086,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.3	1.3	1.24	1.3	573,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	288,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6	5.9	5.9	283,000
Benguet Corp. B	20	20	20	20	2,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	3,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.22	5,840,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	6,250,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	78,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.025	70,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	401,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.72	1.72	1.68	1.72	4,678,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.9	1.9	1.82	1.86	5,399,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	28	28.5	429,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	400,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	310,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	1,150,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	20,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4	4	4	4	30,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	1,101,700

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Financial	2,364,680	100,809,100.00
Industrial	489,009,200	8,114,030,910.00
Holding Firms	73,771,410	232,923,420.00
Property	71,674,200	203,560,605.00
Service	147,374,320	262,410,920.00
Mining & Oil	884,633,000	44,499,200.00
GRAND TOTALS :	1,668,826,810	8,958,234,155.00

	AVERAGES	
Financial	638.70	DOWN 2.95
Industrial	3,113.82	DOWN 17.73
Holding Firms	1,013.55	DOWN 5.27
Property	871.30	DOWN 17.06
Service	970.47	DOWN 7.19
Mining & Oil	2,924.12	DOWN 77.05
All Shares Index	1,274.32	DOWN 9.26
Composite	2,069.89	DOWN 17.75

NO. OF ADVANCES: 12; NO. OF DECLINES: 65; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 52; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 129; NO. OF TRADES: 2,978

CURRENCIES

February 14, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.839913	1.000000	51.5550
Japan	Yen	0.007133	0.008493	0.4379
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462960	1.741800	89.7985
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108232	0.128861	6.6434
Switzerland	Franc	0.642626	0.765111	39.4453
Canada	Dollar	0.726631	0.865127	44.6016
Singapore	Dollar	0.515727	0.614024	31.6560
Australia	Dollar	0.620595	0.738880	38.0930
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.228476	2.653224	136.7870
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223977	0.266667	13.7480
Brunei	Dollar	0.514148	0.612145	31.5591
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000108	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021410	0.025491	1.3142
UAE	Dirham	0.228678	0.272264	14.0366
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.190600	61.3814
Argentina	Peso	0.273810	0.325998	16.8068
Brazil	Real	0.388489	0.462535	23.8460
Denmark	Kroner	0.133964	0.159497	8.2229
India	Rupee	0.019016	0.022640	1.1672
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.225601	0.268601	13.8477
Mexico	New Peso	0.079658	0.094841	4.8895
New Zealand	Dollar	0.570283	0.678979	35.0048
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014045	0.016722	0.8621
South Africa	Rand	0.136250	0.162219	8.3632
Korea	Won	0.000860	0.001024	0.0528
Sweden	Kroner	0.106935	0.127317	6.5638
Syria	Pound	0.016180	0.019264	0.9932
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025949	0.030895	1.5928
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000391	0.000466	0.0240

Asian Spirit fills Laoag void

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

ASIAN SPIRIT IS JUMPING INTO THE VOID left by the Philippine Airlines' cancellation of Laoag flights.

The country's third biggest carrier will start fielding a four-times-a-week flight to the Ilocos Norte capital starting Tuesday, Feb. 21, said Asian Spirit chair Noel Oñate.

Asian Spirit is also undercutting PAL, charging P6,400 for the Manila-Laoag roundtrip, instead of the P6,900 the Lucio Tan carrier used to charge before abruptly stopping flights last Monday.

Asian Spirit will be using its new BAe 146, a 100-seater jet. PAL used the 150-seater Airbus A320. PAL cancelled its Laoag flights when its ground crew balked at reporting for work after a staff member was allegedly bullied by former Mayor Rodolfo Fariñas. The mayor has denied this.

Asian Spirit's new sales agent and franchisee for the Laoag route happens to be Bonito Singson, a younger brother of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

The Singsons are political allies of Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who is opposed to Fariñas. Asian Spirit's Laoag flight leaves the Manila domestic airport at 10 a.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Mondays, and turns around for Manila at 11:30 a.m. on the same days.

Oca's razor

THERE has to be a simpler explanation why La Salle Greenhills president Bernard Oca would rather resort to using ACCRA as front men instead of him meeting the parents of a bully victim himself.

What is more puzzling than the school's hiring of top litigators is that, even before this legal dodge, the assistant grade school principal had already taken it upon himself to investigate the bullying incidents, which include allegations of cell phone- and allowance-theft and—this one is an adult crime—check forgery.

Stranger still, the assistant principal borrowed, and then lost, the bully's handwritten confession/apology to the victim's parents.

Even more puzzling, the principal, Evangeline Tamaca, expressed surprise on hearing the complaints and the hush-hush investigation already conducted by her male assistant when the parents finally went to see her in November.

The parents visited the Greenhills school last Nov. 8 but it formed a review board only on Jan. 27, after the frantic parents again complained that the bully—a 15-year-old, 5'8", 150-lb taekwondo practitioner—again delivered some body blows at their quaking 13-year-old, 4'11", 100-lb son. The son's crime? Squealing, according to the bully.

Other than the latest assault, the victim had been ambushed in the bathroom so many times before that his father, a foreigner, wondered what makes the teenager, a class repeater, so dear to the La Salle brothers.

"The school is firmly committed to observing the right to due process," ACCRA explained when the parents wrote to Oca last week complaining of the investigative gridlock.

"If you have any evidence in your possession … then you are certainly welcome to extend your cooperation."

Money-go-round

- MALACAÑANG has sounded off Namfrel counsel Jose "Bong" Bernas and former Rizal Rep. Egmidio "Ding" Tanjuatco for two of three board vacancies in the Commission on Elections.
- The shortlist of candidates for the presidency of the Asian Institute of Management, vice the retiring Roberto de Ocampo, includes AIM trustee Francis Estrada, Ramcar president Roberto Garcia, DBP chair Vitaliano Nañagas II and former Metro Pacific president Ricardo Pascua.

Heard through the grapevine

THE Bases Conversion Development Authority has given the all-clear signal for next month's opening of the Thunderbird casino-resort in Poro Point, despite the last-minute hurdles posed, ironically, by Poro Point Management Corp. chair Filodelfo Roxas.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Coco-based . . .

From page B1

to 11,563 MT from 6,1790 MT while those of copra meal went up by 34.8 percent to 42,210 MT from 31,323 MT.

However, December volumes of desiccated coconut shrank by 27.2 percent to 7,207 MT from 9,893 MT, which was the smallest volume delivered for a month in the entire year.

The United States cornered 47.8 percent or 57,516 MT of all coconut oil shipments from the country in December while 37.3 percent or 44,920 MT went to the European market.

Other shipments went to Malaysia with 8,000 MT, Japan with 4,850 MT, Korea with 3,000 MT and Indonesia with 2,000 MT.

Shares close lower

From page B1

nouncement on Monday.

While most blue chip companies have been reporting strong profits for the past year, investors are not sure the momentum can be sustained amid higher taxes and rising business costs, said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

"Investors are sort of cautious on equity investments in the region given concerns on valuations and the earnings outlook," Vistan said.

AFP

Yield of 10-year . . .

From page B1

10-year bonds. Volume of bids reached P8.6 billion, making the government securities oversubscribed. The government has programmed and accepted P4 billion worth of borrowings through the 10-year bonds.

Cruz said the volume of bids for the 10-year bonds reflected investor confidence in the government's long-term fiscal prospects.

The drop in the interest rate for the 10-year bonds followed the decline in all treasury bill yields last Monday. The benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate fell by a basis point to 5.087 percent, while the 182- and 364-day bills fetched lower rates of 6.168 percent and 7.24 percent, respectively.

The declining interest rates were attributed to the announcement by Fitch Ratings last Monday and by Standard and Poor's last week that they had revised their outlook on the Philippines from "negative" to "stable."

This left only Moody's Investors Service having a "negative" outlook on the Philippines among the three major international credit-rating firms.

Fitch and S&P said they took into account the Philippine government's improving fiscal position in their decision to change their outlook on the country.

Last year, the government budget deficit dropped to P146.5 billion, or much lower than the official ceiling of P180 billion set by fiscal authorities. With the expected revenues from a higher VAT rate, the government expects its deficit to further decline to P125 billion this year.

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PRISM
PRIVATE SECTOR MOBILIZATION FOR FAMILY PLANNING

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

REQUEST FOR SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Private Sector Mobilization for Family Planning (PRISM), a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under contract number 492-C-00-0400036-00 and implemented by a consortium led by Chemonics International Inc., is soliciting applications for the grant objective:

Installation and Maintenance of Workplace Family Planning (FP) Program in Firms without FP Program [Code: RFA # 2006-01-03]

Grant funding will be provided to successful applications in accordance with the standard USAID policies.

This call for application is open to non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as private sector for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Specific eligibility requirements are indicated in the Request for Application (RFA) document.

The full request for application (RFA) document will be released on February 15, 2006. Copies can be downloaded from the PRISM Grants Yahoo group **(http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/PRISMGrants/)** or can be requested from **grants@prism.org.ph.**

Details of the call for application will be fully discussed in a grant conference. The conference will be held on March 01, 2006 at 10am (PRISM Manila office); February 24, 2006 at 10am (Cebu PRISM Office) and February 27, 2006, 10am (Davao PRISM Office). Please secure complete address of the venue for the conference from Lila Clavel at telephone number 635-2397 local 275.

For any other inquiry please email grants@prism.org.ph.

(PDI-Feb. 15 & 19, 2006)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is herbey given that the estate of the late Hermilo Soliman Trias has been extra-judicially settled among his heirs before Notary Public Benedicta F. Barrientsos as per Doc. 116, Page# 25, Book # XI, Series of 2005 (PDI-February 1, 8 & 15, 2006)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late FELICIDAD TABERNERO who died on October 2, 1985 was extrajudicially settled in accordance with the extrajudicial settlement with waiver of rights by the heirs duly executed before Notary Public Consul General Rolando Guzman of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada per doc WG-463 Series 536 O.R. No.888998; Consul Raul Hernandez, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada as per Doc 068; Page 116; Book 08; Series of 2005. (PDI-Feb. 15, 22& 28,2006)

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Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

MA. TERESA G. ROELLI,
Petitioner,
-versus-
MARIA REBECCA ROELLI
and the PRESIDENT,
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Respondent.

SSC Case No. 3-15665-04

x---x

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

TO: MARIA REBECCA ROELLI

GREETINGS:

Notice is hereby given that on the 21st day of December, 2005, a **RESOLUTION**, consisting of five (5) pages, was promulgated in the above-mentioned case, the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

> **"WHEREFORE, FOREGOING PREMISES CONSIDERED,** this Commission finds that petitioner is the dependent legitimate wife and primary beneficiary of the late retiree-pensioner John Roelli (a.k.a. Hans Rolli), and that she is entitled to the survivor's pension benefit accruing from his death.
>
> Accordingly, the SSS is hereby directed to immediately pay the aforestated survivor's pension benefit to petitioner Ma. Teresa Gemperle Roelli, subject to its existing rules and regulations, and to inform this Commission of its compliance herewith.
>
> **SO ORDERED."**

Makati City, January 26, 2006.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - Feb. 15, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION
National Electrification Commission

APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF FRANCHISE TO OPERATE AN ELECTRIC LIGHT, HEAT AND POWER SYSTEM IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF DANGCAGAN, DON CARLOS, KALILANGAN, KIBAWE, KITAOTAO, MARAMAG, PANGANTUCAN, SAN FERNANDO, QUEZON, VALENCIA, KADINGILAN, DAMULOG, ALL IN PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON; AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF WAO, PROVINCE OF LANAO DEL SUR

NEC CASE NO. 2005-32

FIRST BUKIDNON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (FIBECO)
Applicant

x---x

NOTICE OF HEARING

Applicant, an electric cooperative duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the Philippines, requests that its franchise to operate electric light and power system in the Municipalities of Dangcagan, Don Carlos, Kalilangan, Kibawe, Kitaotao, Maramag, Pangantucan, San Fernando, Quezon, Valencia, Kadingilan, Damulog, all in Province of Bukidnon; and the Municipality of Wao, Province of Lanao del Sur, granted under NEC Resolution No. 107, dated June 17 1981, be renewed for twenty-five (25) years

This application will be heard by this Commission on February 28, 2006, Tuesday, at 10:00 in the morning at the Board Room of First Bukidnon Electric Cooperative, Inc. (FIBECO), Maramag, Bukidnon at which hearing. Applicant will present evidence of its capabilities, financially, technically and institutionally to operate electric light heat and power service in the area applied for.

At least ten (10) days prior to date of hearing, Applicant shall publish this Notice of Hearing once in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines

Applicant shall submit at the hearing proof of compliance with these requirements: Affidavits of the editors or business managers of the newspapers in which this notice of hearing was published, together with complete copies of the issues of the newspapers.

The applicant is also hereby directed to post this Notice of Hearing in the Municipalities of Dangcagan, Don Carlos, Kalilangan; Kibawe, Kitaotao, Maramag, Pangantucan, San Fernando, Quezon, Valencia, Kadingilan, Damulog, and Wao, as well as in FIBECO headquarters and sub-offices ten (10) days prior to the date of hearing.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition with the Commission at least five (5) days before the date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the Applicant and appear at the hearing with such evidence as may be proper in the premises. Failure on the part of any person affected to file his or her opposition on time and appear at the hearing will be construed, as a waiver of his or her rights to be heard and the Commission will proceed to hear and decide the application on its merits

Given this 2nd day of February 2006, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

By the Authority of the Commission:

(Sgd.) NOLLIE B. ALAMILLO
OIC, NEC Office and
Corporate Board Secretary V

Noted by:

(Sgd.) ATTY. JOHN JOSEPH M. MAGTULOY, CPA
Deputy Administrator for Legal Services

(PDI-Feb 15 2006)

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given of an Extrajudicial Settlement executed by the heirs of the deceased ELEANOR C. FLORES also known as Ma. Eleanor C. Flores over her estate before Notary Public Benigno M. Puno of Pasig City, under Doc. No. 389, Page No. 79, Book No IX, Series of 2006.

(PDI Feb 8, 15 & 22, 2006)

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF CAPIZ
City of Roxas, Province of Capiz
(036) 6210-036 Local 254
Fax No.: (036) 6210-036 Local 158

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Capiz thru its BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC) invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Contract : Concreting of Timpas-Malapad Cogon Road Phase-II, Panitan, Capiz
Location : Panitan, Capiz
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : 18,700,000.00
Source of fund : General Fund

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Starting of submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application of Eligibility	Feb. 13, 2006
2. Issuance of Bid Documents	Feb. 14, 2006
3. Pre-Bid Conference	February 17, 2006
4. Opening of Bids	February 24, 2006

1. In order to qualify for participation in the public bidding, bidders should conform to all eligibility requirements as prescribed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Act 9184.
2. The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility forms at Provincial General Services Office, Provincial Capitol , Roxas City upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of prescribed non-refundable fee of PESOS: Four Thousand Pesos (P4,000.00).
3. Bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the same address
4. Bidders shall drop their duly accomplished technical and financial proposals in two separate envelopes in the bid boxes before the deadline of submission of bids.
5. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in a form of cash and must be delivered to the PGSO on or before the bid closing date.
6. BAC Committee assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.
7. BAC Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure or not to award the contract; and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) DANTE B. BERMEJO
Chairman
BAC Committee

(PDI – February 13 & 15, 2006)

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

February 10, 2006

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS INVITING INTERESTED BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Package 1:
1. Conductor, ACSR Duplex #6 – 50,000 Meters
2. Conductor, ACSR # 1/0 – 10,000 Meters
3. Conductor, Polytheline # 1/0 - 10,000 Meters

Package 2:
1. Pole, Concrete 30' Class 7A - 50 Pieces
2. Pole, Concrete 35' Class 7A — 70 Pieces
3. Pole, Concrete 40' Class 7A - 30 Pieces

Package 3:
1. Transformer, Dist. 25 KVA (7620/13.2, 120-240v) — 10 Units
2. Transformer, Dist. 37.5 KVA (7620/13.2, 120-240v) — 10 Units
3. Transformer, Dist. 50 KVA (7620/13.2, 120-240v) — 10 Units

You are therefore invited to submit your bids/proposals to the PBAC and participate in a sealed bidding on February 23, 2006 (Thursday), 11:00 A.M. at PELCO II Board Room San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representatives. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.

REQUEST FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SEALED BIDS/PROPOSALS ASIDE FROM THE BID AMOUNT, THE TERMS OF PAYMENT. THE BID BOND IS EITHER IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TWO AND ONE HALF PERCENT (2.5%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OR SURETY BOND (W/ O.R.) EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE. ALL BIDDERS ARE REQUESTED TO BE AT PELCO II BOARD ROOM AT EXACTLY 11:00 A.M. TO SECURE BID DOCUMENTS AND FURTHER CLARIFICATION PLEASE CONTACT OR VISIT PBAC CHAIRPERSON MS. ANA LEA N. NARCISO, TEL. NO. (045) 900-0611 OR MR NEIL S. ISIP (045) 901-0864-65.

PLEASE BE INFORMED TO SUBMIT THREE (3) SEPARATE BID/PROPOSALS WITH CORRESPONDING BID BONDS FOR PACKAGE 1, PACKAGE 2 & PACKAGE 3 RESPECTIVELY

LATE SUBMISSION OF BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. THE PBAC HAS THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN THE PROPOSAL RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT SUCH MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) ANA LEA N. NARCISO
PBAC Chairperson

(PDI – February 14 & 15, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
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Center for Health Development – Ilocos
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center, Batac, Ilocos Norte, through its Bids and Awards Committee, invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Hospital Medical Equipment
Drugs and Medicines Requirements
Medical / Surgical Supplies, Dental & X'ray Supplies
Laboratory Supplies and Reagents

The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 & its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Issuance of Bid Documents —	February 22-28, 2006
Pre-Bid Conference —	March 17, 2006
Eligibility Check —	March 20-28, 2006
Opening of Bid Documents —	Mach 29-31, 2006
Bid Evaluation —	April 12, 2006
Post-Qualification —	April 21, 2006
Issuance of Notice of Award -	End of April 2006

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **TWO THOUSAND PESOS** only (Php 2,000.00) to the Cashier. Bid documents maybe secured at the Property & Supply Office.

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bids.

(Sgd.) MONA LIZA B. PASTRANA, M.D., FPOGS
BAC Chairman

(PDI – February 15 & 21, 2006)

More Classified Ads on pages A18 & B9

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In Loving Memory of
The Tenth Death Anniversary of

ATTY. MAURINO "URING" R. SOBREPEÑA

of San Jose City, Nueva Ecija
June 10, 1923 – February 15, 1996

His loving wife, **ONOR**; children, **JOE** and **MERLY FALGIANI**, **FRANK** and **ALICE FERINA**, **GUY** and **MARY SOBREPEÑA**, **CHITO** and **ANNA SOBREPEÑA**, **RINO SOBREPEÑA** and **DAN** and **LEAH JOSLIN**; gandchildren and relatives request the pious readers to pray for his soul.

Masses will be celebrated today at the:

St. Joseph Cathedral, San Jose City .... 6:00 A.M.
Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows .... 7:00 A.M.
Shrine of the Two Hearts, San Jose City .... 6:00 A.M.
Mary Help of Christian Church, San Jose City .... 6:00 P.M.
St. Edward the Confessor Church .... Feb. 19, 2006
New Fairfield, Connecticut, U.S.A. .... 7:30 A.M.

Orlando "Orling" Quinto Mendoza

of San Agustin, Lubao, Pampanga

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 12, 2006 at 5:30 a.m.

He will be missed by his brothers and sisters
Mr. & Mrs. Telesforo Q. Mendoza, Dr. Romeo Q. Mendoza,
Ms. Tessie Q. Mendoza, Mr. & Mrs. Loreto Q. Mendoza,
Mr. & Mrs. Dominador M. de Leon, Mr. & Mrs. Carmelino Q.
Mendoza, Mr. & Mrs. Honorio Q. Mendoza,
Ms. Babes M. Tulud, Mr. & Mrs. Ricardo L. Crescini Jr. (Australia),
nephews, nieces, relatives & friends. We request the pious reader
to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie at his residence San Agustin, Lubao, Pampanga.

Interment will be tomorrow, February 16, 2006
at the Lubao Memorial Park after the 2:00 o'clock p.m. Mass.

Dr. BENEDICTO P. RIVERA, MD

Professor III, University of Sto. Tomas College of Medicine & Surgery
Fellow, International College of Surgeon
Fellow, Philippine College of Surgeon

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 12, 2006 at the age of 78.

His loving wife **Telly**; children **Leah**, **Bing** and **Sonny**, **Christine**, **Junie**, **Robert**, **SJ.**, **Noel** and **Bechie**, **Josephine** (†), **Christian** and grandchildren, **Rhia**, **Dindin**, **Beatrice** and **Harley** request the pious readres to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Friday, February 17, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Park after the 9:00 a.m. Mass which will be held at the UST Chapel.

LIM SAY

AKA CHUA PUG of Atimonan, Quezon
Peacefully joined his Creator on February 11, 2006
at the age of 96.

His bereaved wife **Charing Tan**; children, grandchildren and great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Rizal Funeral Homes, Inc., Libertad, Pasay City, where mass will be held at 7:00 p.m. every night. Interment will be at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City tomorrow, February 16, 2006 at 8:00 a.m.

Our Dearly Beloved

RODOLFO CAMAQUIN VIDAD

Peacefully joined our Lord
on February 13, 2006
at the age of 78.

His loving sisters **Julia V. Nagtalon** and **Editha C. Vidad**; his nephews and nieces, **Melvyn** & **Angie**, **Karina** & **Ed Sanchez**, **Eric** & **Susan**, **Ruby** & **Eloy Foronda**, **Raul** & **Gina**, and **Rene**, his grandchildren and great grandchildren; and all his relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Chapel A, La Funeraria Paz, Inc., located at G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on February 16, 2006, 3:00 p.m., at Himlayang Pilipino, Quezon City, after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

RUBY KELLEY MANGAHAS

May 27, 1916 - February 3, 2006

Peacefully passed away in the Grace of our Lord
in Stockton, California at the age of 89.

Her sons, **Mahar**, **Rabel**, **Fred Bonny** and their families; nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends request your prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

She will lie in state at the Church of the Risen Lord in the University of the Philippines campus, Diliman, Quezon City. A musical tribute in her honor will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, February 17, 2006 at the Nicanor Abelardo Hall of the U.P. College of Music.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City on Saturday, February 18, 2006 after the 8:00 a.m. Christian services at the Church of the Risen Lord.

ENGINEER/ARCHITECT RODOLFO CAMAQUIN VIDAD

Vice-President & Treasurer

Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 13, 2006 at the age of 78.

With a deep sense of loss,

The Board of Directors, Stockholders and Employees of

AGVID CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.

condole with his entire family and request the pious readers
to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz,
G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on February 16, 2006, 3:00 p.m.,
at Himlayang Pilipino, Quezon City,
after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

"...absent
from the
body
to be
present
with the
Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

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The Beta Epsilon Fraternity
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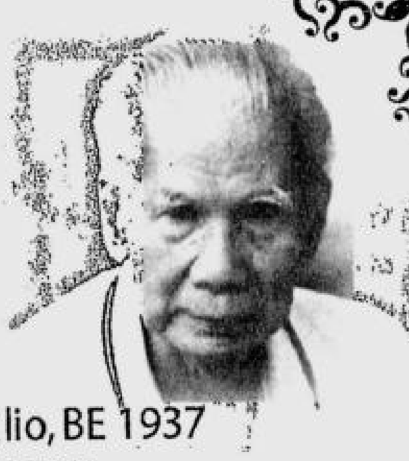
Engineering joins the
bereaved family of



Prof. Dominador Ibarra Ilio, BE 1937 BSCE 1939, BSGE 1939, MSCE

in mourning the loss of a brother, teacher, engineer, poet, writer, painter, WWII guerilla, and friend.

"Prof" passed away peacefully at the age of 92, last February 7, 2006, in his hometown Malinao, Aklan.

Interment will be on February 18, 2006 after the 8:00 A.M. mass in Malinao.

A Memorial Mass and Necrological Service will be held on February 21, 6:00 p.m. at the College of Engineering Theater, Melchor Hall, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City.

"Come to Me, all
you who are weary
and burdened, and
I will give you
rest."

Matthew 11:28

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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
Manolo S. Camara	Chapel B-5, Q.C.	Feb. 15, 2006/9.00 AM	North Cemetery
Cliff Brian Constantino	Chapel C-12, Q.C.	Feb. 18, 2006/9:00 AM	Chinese Crematory

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CLASSIFIEDS

ANOTHER YEAR FOR PMAP & CHINATRUST PARTNERSHIP

Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank Corp recently signed Memo of Agreement with PMAP as 2006 PMAP Partner led by its leaders (center) Chinatrust's president Mr. Joey Bermudez and PMAP's president, Atty. Rico De Guzman. Witnessing the signing are Ms. Jo Natividad, Chinatrust senior VP for Marketing, Ms. Debbie Centeno, PMAP treasurer, Mr. Tony Robles, Chinatrust EVP for Retail Banking and Ms. Imee Centeno, PMAP vice president.

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26

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r D. Mangawang

New Galant to face off vs Camry, Accord

GALANT 240M

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE THREE-DIAMOND LOGO car company, which is determined to leave its woes behind as the maker of Eclipse (an enthusiast's favorite, particularly in the United States) and the iconic "Evo" (cult status achiever in the high-performance sedan category), launches the all new Galant 240M.

The Galant, Mitsubishi's European-inspired sedan, is an exclusive design by Mercedes-Benz's former chief designer Oliver Boulay. It is one of Boulay's last projects with Mitsubishi.

Aggressive product offensive

It has been seen that the Galant 240M signals the start of an aggressive product offensive for Mitsubishi in 2006. The Galant 240M (with the same engine as the Mitsubishi Grandis' 2.4-liter Mivec engine) will compete with the two most popular full-sized sedans in the market: the 2.4-liter Toyota Camry (which has two variants in the 2.4-liter, and one 3-liter variant) and Honda Accord (which has a 2.4- and 3-liter variants).

In the United States, the Galant offers a 3.8-liter V6 aside from its 2.4-liter engine. Asked why Mitsubishi did not offer the V6 variant in the Philippines, Froilan Dytianquin, assistant vice president for marketing, said the V6 market did not offer sustained demands in the long run.

Introductory sales strong

He observed that the introductory sales of 3-liter sedans were initially strong but the sustaining sales turned out small. "There's still more sales volume in the 2.4 category," he said. Dytianquin stressed that the small sustaining volume in the three-liter category is due to the rising fuel cost.

Wider and longer than the Camry and the Accord (but lower than the Camry, with its aerodynamic considerations), the Galant is bigger in every aspect than its predecessor, measuring 4885mm long (Accord at 4831mm; Camry at 4815mm), 1840mm wide (Accord at 1821mm; Camry at 1795mm) and 1,480mm high (Accord at 1455mm; Camry at 1515mm). Its cabin room length of 1997mm boasts of being the most spacious in its class with more leg room for its passengers.

The wheelbase in mm are 2750 (Galant) 2738 (Accord) 2720 (Camry).

From China Motors

Known as the Mitsubishi Grunder in Taiwan, the Galant 240M came from China Motors Corp. assembled exclusively in Taiwan for left-hand-drive countries in Southeast Asia. Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Inc. has initially imported 50 units.

The 2.4-liter engine is a 4G69 Mitsubishi Valve timing and lift Electronic Control System (Mivec) engine. Mivec engines are known for maximizing fuel efficiency, torque and low-end pickup while minimizing exhaust emissions.

The engine is mated to a 4-speed Invecs II automatic transmission with Sportronic. (Invecs II intelligent and innovative vehicle electronic control system with two control programs).

It has an all-wheel independent suspension system with MacPherson struts with stabilizer bars up front and multilink with stabilizer bars at the rear to help reduce understeer and improve cornering stability.

It has four-wheel disc brakes, tandem brake boosters, monitored by the four-sensor, 3-channel ABS with electronic brakeforce distribution that prevents locking (to remain steerable during emergency braking). It also has reinforced impact safety evolution.

With a three-year or 100,000 km warranty, the Galant has an introductory price of P1,548,000. Camry is priced at P1.558 million (2.4V), P1.37 million (2.4E) and P1.762 million (3.0E) while Accord's new SRP with 12 percent VAT is P1.428 million for the 2.4 liter and P1.663 million for the 3 liter.

FIA official arriving for AAP celebration

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Fast Lane is one of the anniversary projects of AAP's motor sports committee

MAX MOSELEY, PRESIDENT OF THE Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the Paris-based governing body for motor sports worldwide, has designated FIA Secretary General Peter Doggwiler to attend the grand 75th anniversary celebration of Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) this May.

AAP is the country's first auto club and, being the only motoring organization in the Philippines accredited by the FIA, officiates all motor sport activities in the country and issues competition licenses to race drivers aside from organizing permits.

Corollary to this, one of the AAP Diamond Anniversary events that Doggwiler will attend is the launch of Fast Lane, a coffee table book on Philippine motor sports history and personalities, replete with pictures. Fast Lane is one of the anniversary projects of AAP's motor sports committee which is chaired by Mandy Eduque, one of several AAP directors (the others are AAP president Gus Lagman and VP Johnny Angeles) who were race drivers in their youth.

Motor sports

The other AAP anniversary activities that Doggwiler will surely enjoy attending are the motor sport events. Aside from the annual Sampaguita Rally, which is slated for April 22 as a precursor to anniversary week, a karting competition will be held on Sunday, May 14, at the Kart Trak, Boom Grounds on Roxas Boulevard. A rally cross, slalom or 4 x 4 event is also planned. Appropriately enough, the Diamond Anniversary Week will be capped by the Philippine Motor Sport Awards Dinner hosted annually by AAP.

AAP joined the FIA in 1951 when it was still known as the Philippine Motor Association. AAP has also been affiliated for over 50 years with the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme (AIT), which is based in Geneva and was recently merged with the FIA.

Touring, in fact, is one of the Seven Mandates of AAP aside from motor sports. The national auto club strives to provide its members (currently 60,000 in number) and the motoring public with information on road conditions, travel accommodations and tourist attractions, thereby promoting domestic tourism.

Tourism support

Small wonder that the Department of Tourism is supporting AAP's Diamond Anniversary by including its activities in the DoT website and extending VIP airport reception and assistance to the FIA secretary general and members from other FIA-affiliated Asian auto clubs traveling to Manila for AAP's 75th anniversary golf tournament.

Aside from tracing the development of motor sports in the Philippines via a coffee table book, AAP will also highlight the development of the automotive industry via a Vintage Car Parade and an Auto Show from May 12, Friday, until May 14, Sunday, at The Forum, PICC displaying the oldest and latest models of major car manufacturers. AAP, after all, is the national auto club and you cannot be a member unless you are a motorist, if not a car lover.

It is the Club's good luck that AAP director Ronald Reidenbach, chair of the AAP Diamond Anniversary committee, is also president emeritus of the Vintage Car Club. The anniversary week kicks off with a Vintage Car Parade along Roxas Boulevard on Sunday morning, May 7, that should attract car collectors and car enthusiasts.

Road safety

Prior to all these, AAP's mission to promote road safety takes center stage with the fourth of a series of six conferences on road safety organized by AAP and the University of the Philippines National Center for Transportation Studies with Toyota Motor Corp. Philippines as sponsor. AAP plans to launch a pilot Road Safety Zone at the UP Diliman campus during the Diamond Anniversary week. A conference on alternative fuels is also being planned.

AAP members, naturally, stand to enjoy most the 75th anniversary observance of the Club. The annual AAP general membership meeting on May 11 will be an extra special one with all the frills and hoopla befitting a Diamond Anniversary celebration, including a greater number of raffle prizes.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: I don't approve of political jokes—I've seen too many of them get elected.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

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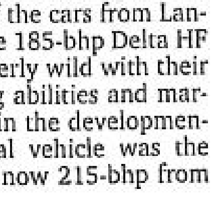
A history, a worship of heat

MY DRIFT



Andre Palma

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT NOT TO TALK ABOUT the topic of love these days; the cogs of business and advertising have begun to spool in preparation for another billion dollar payday on the 14th. Who can blame them? The human emotions associated with attraction are quite irrepressible and rather decisive in nature—hence the undivided attention of the greeting card companies, florists and motels.

While I'm certain my colleagues in the print media are going to fill their allotted spaces with "wooing and winning" stories, the confines of this column will focus on a love that is distant, unrequited, insanely passionate and very, very personal. While I am attracted to cars in general like any normal octane-blooded petrol head, my heart belongs, wholly and irrevocably, to the unassuming hatchback. Worse still is my long standing devotion to those hatches that display enough dynamic heat to be labeled as truly blistering.

History of the genre

What makes a hot hatch ever so desirable? Is this something that can be attributed to a single factor, like power or handling? We must look at the rather extensive history of the genre, a veritable who's who of the best money for speed in the last 30 years or so.

We have to look back to June 1976 for the recognized pioneer and spiritual forebear of this entertaining segment. There cannot be a better start to this narrative than the Mk1 Volkswagen Golf GTi. Take a sweet handling, lightweight chassis and power it with an ample amount of engine; this Golf came with a factory 1.6-liter with a then whopping 108 bhp. Success of this experiment in "blue collar speed" (a term used to describe the value for money drive quality of these cheap pocket rockets), then spread like wildfire.

Included in the first batch of hot hatch manufacturers are the marquees of Renault, Vauxhall/Opel and Ford. Cars like the Peugeot 205 GTi, the Renault 5 GT Turbo as well as the Ford Escort XR3i are excellent specimens born of this "power to the masses" movement. Ten years into the phenomenon and another icon is born of the manufacturing race for more heat; Ford's 1986 Escort RS Turbo now comes stock with 130 bhp with tuners often extracting well over 200-bhp from these cars.

More familiar image

A vehicle that is a more familiar image in the Filipino hot hatch consciousness is the 1997-on Honda Civic Type R. Though initially unavailable in the local market, the images of these real world speedsters came over the Internet and foreign publications. Factory supplied with a 185-bhp 1.6-liter, in the form of the B16B screamer, the tweaked suspension along with the boy racer good looks more than helped ensure the classic status of these Championship White colored bolts of lightning.

The definitive expressions of these types of vehicles have obviously come from the realm motorsport, especially from the lethal Group B formula of the World Rally Championships. We cannot talk of these fire-breathing widow makers without talking of the cars from Lancia. They took a then tame 185-bhp Delta HF Turbo 4x4 and went properly wild with their imaginations, engineering abilities and marketing budgets. The first in the developmental history of this mental vehicle was the Evoluzione specification, now 215-bhp from a two-liter block.

Then in a moment that is debatably borne of either genius or sheer madness, the monster Group B Integrale was conceived. The sheer numbers involved are insane, 450-bhp from a two-liter, four-pot unimaginably blown by both a supercharger and a turbocharger. With foot-long flames sprouting from this rally car during every downshift, it can be said that this is a car that literally burned and branded itself into the imagination of many a car enthused youth of the '80s.

New wave

Thirty years on and the world market is once again inundated with a new wave of these cars. More than a dozen manufacturers produce a hot hatch in some form or the other, ranging from the original pioneers in Europe to even brands like Kia (with their 280-bhp, AWD Sport).

Though what critically defines the segment is clear, that of economical power with confident handling, certain X-factors also must be present. It would not be out of place to say that styling and a motorsport background are great plus factors for these types of vehicles. All I know is that I'm thankful for the near permanence of the hot hatch segment, partially for the wonderful play on the themes of power and practicality. For the most part though, the gratification is personal.

X5 Security: discreet yet potent vehicle

By Charles E. Buban

THE PURPOSE OF RIDING in an armored vehicle is to be able to thwart an initial armed attack—should such a situation occur—and get out of the place as quickly as possible.

To do this, the vehicle must not only possess a high level of armor protection but also handling performance as well as driving character that is the same if not better than its unarmored counterpart.

"The first line of defense for anyone at risk is discretion," BMW Group Asia Douglas Hornell Scott said. "So we've developed this product with the right blend of luxury, security and discretion."

Scott recently planed in to the country to formally unveil the armored version of the German automaker's best selling sports activity vehicle, the X5 Security.

Increase in threat

"Nowadays, we've started to see an increase in the threat of random crime and street violence. Personal security is now a growing concern as corporate leaders, entertainers and ordinary citizens become victims so BMW has stepped up," he said.

Until now, armored vehicles in the country were mostly products of aftermarket companies—businesses which take assembly line-made cars and customize them with armor and other features.

But unlike protection vehicles that are outfitted on an "aftermarket" basis, Scott said, the X5 Security has been designed, engineered and tested by BMW (in its Research and Engineering Center in Munich, Germany) to provide armored protection without compromising driving performance, crash durability or luxury offerings found in a typical X5.

Integrated

The X5 Security's armoring is integrated in the vehicle right from the beginning of the production process to ensure optimum protection of areas and cavities not reached when retrofitting armored vehicles.

Scott added that the X5 Security's neutral, secure driving characteristic is almost identical to that of the standard X5.

"BMW has put considerable emphasis on ensuring that the X5 Security is indistinguishable from its nonarmored counterpart. Its special armor is extremely difficult, even for trained eyes, to spot from the outside, resulting in an exceptionally discrete blend of security and driving pleasure," he said.

Not compromised

But despite a slight increase in weight due to armoring, the dynamic driving qualities of the X5 Security has not been compromised. Its 4.4-liter gasoline engine generates 324.4 horsepower, which enables it to reach 100 kph in just 7.8 seconds (compared to its unarmored counterpart's 7 seconds) and reach the electronically limited top speed of 210 kph (240 kph for the unarmored).

"And because the X5 Security is developed and produced exclusively by BMW, this not only guarantees high quality but also ensures complete support from its dealer and service network here," said Leana Farrales of BMW Philippines corporate communications.

She also added that the X5 Security is equipped with BMW's patented xDrive all-wheel-drive system, which gives the vehicle impressive go-anywhere character.

Paging Mayor Belmonte, MMDA

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

I'VE SAID IT MANY TIMES HERE BUT I WILL say it again anyway if only to stress the obvious. Most, if not all, of the traffic signs in the metropolis are placed on spots where traffic enforcers love to congregate.

You'll be a hypocrite if you say you don't know the reason for that—the enforcers' congregation, that is.

We see "Unloading and Loading" signs almost everywhere. Also, the "No Stopping Anytime" sign is as visible as the "No Parking" sign.

But come to think of it. Most, if not all, of them are placed on areas where it is convenient for both commuters and bus/jeepney drivers to go to.

* * *

Usually, the traffic signs are placed far away from where it is convenient for commuters to flag their public rides.

Take the case of the overpass. Isn't it convenient for commuters if "Loading/Unloading" signs are placed near an overpass?

But no, you will find the signs a bit farther from an overpass, thus inconveniencing commuters as they need to still walk another mile or two from the stairs of an overpass.

Such signs also lure the bus/jeepney drivers to load/unload their passengers at the foot of an overpass—right in front of the "No Loading/Unloading" signs—to ease the inconvenience of their customers.

Most of the time, traffic enforcers ignore violations. Again, if you don't know the reason, you were born yesterday.

Once in a while, traffic enforcers enforce the law. Again, if you don't know the reason, you were born yesterday.

Anyway, corruption it is that makes traffic enforcers to either ignore the violations or enforce the law.

Bottom line is, the traffic signs are there, yes, but they are placed on areas that are actually convenient for bus/jeepney drivers passengers and traffic enforcers—if you know what I mean.

It is only when a traffic enforcer is either in a bad mood or new in the beat—or his superior suddenly gets temperamental—that the bus/jeepney driver is inconvenienced through a sudden apprehension.

In short, corruption, my dear, is the other meaning of those traffic signs in the city.

* * *

But not only are bus/jeepney drivers get inconvenienced by those signs but also private motorists like you and me.

For example, there's this newly placed sign at Edsa and Quezon Boulevard apportioning two routes to segregate public rides from private rides going to UP-Diliman.

Alas, at nighttime, the signs can't be seen at all. Result: traffic enforcers have a field day apprehending unsuspecting private motorists, who, I was told, shell out a minimum of P100 each to avoid getting a citation ticket.

It is, of course, bad for us to bribe our way out of a fix. But this country has become so calloused to values that indifference has almost become a way of life.

Will the MMDA, if not Mayor Belmonte, or anybody, please do something about that corruption-laden spot underneath the flyover of Edsa and Quezon Boulevard?

* * *

INNOVATIVE INNOVA. Not only is the Fortuner a big hit up till now. Include the Innova, the locally manufactured Toyota Motor Philippines IMV (Innovative Multipurpose Vehicle), which continues to hit top-selling charts after a sales record of 12,130 units in 2005—tops for the year. Each time I see someone buying an Innova—as what my good neighbor Jake P. Ayson did some weeks back—I remember Nobuharu Tabata, the TMP president, who will turn over the reins to Hiroshi Ito today, Feb. 15, in an expectedly glittering ceremonies presided over by the TMP chair himself, George S.K. Ty. It was Tabata-san who personally pushed for the Innova to "be the logical choice of Filipinos because every sale of it means a continued strong employment rate for the country." I'm impressed! As Danny "Sir John" Isla loves to say about Tabata-san, which Ariel de Jesus and Elijah Sue Marcial would nod approvingly: "His legacy of four Triple Crowns for Toyota in his four years as TMP president is a benchmark in the motoring industry." Indeed, it is.

Again, *sayonara*, Tabata-san.

* * *

QUOTE ME. You drive unnecessarily fast, you might as well necessarily crash.

NDC

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

INVITATION TO BID

The NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (NDC) invites interested bidders for the sale of its property with a total land area of 6,277 square meters located along Gaffud St., Barangay Soyung, Echague, Isabela on an "as is, where is" basis. The minimum bid is set at P1,269,400.00 inclusive of Value Added Tax (VAT).

Interested parties may register and secure Bidding Guidelines upon payment of P500.00 which is non-refundable beginning February 20, 2006 at

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
C/o The Secretariat
Disposal Committee
7th Floor, National Development Company Bldg.
116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
Direct Line: (02) 840-13-36; (02) 840-11-47;
Trunk Line: (02) 840-48-38 Locals 212, 267 & 269

A pre-bid conference shall be held on March 6, 2006, 9:30 AM at the Alberto Barretto Hall, National Development Company Building.

Bids must be sealed and submitted between 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM of March 10, 2006 labeled and addressed as follows:

The CHAIRMAN
Disposal Committee
National Development Company
7th Floor, NDC Building
116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
CODE: Soyung, Echague Property

The opening of sealed bids prepared in the prescribed forms and accompanied by a 10% bid bond is scheduled on March 10 at 2:01 PM at the Alberto Baretto Hall, NDC Building in the presence of all bidder(s) and /or their authorized representatives. Bids received after 2:00 PM shall no longer be accepted.

The NDC Disposal Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids or to waive any of the formalities required, or accept only such bids which are deemed advantageous to NDC

Disposal Committee Chairman

(PDI February 13, 14 & 15, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court through the Committee on Bids invites prospective bidders who are authorized distributors and/or authorized resellers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Name of Project	Approved Budget	Source of Funding
LOT 1 – OFFICE SUPPLIES (1st QUARTER 2006)	P 13,852,100.64	General Appropriations Act 2006
LOT 2 – PRINTING SUPPLIES (1st QUARTER 2006)	P 1,155,385.00	General Appropriations Act 2006
LOT 3 – MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES (1st QUARTER 2006)	P 1,150,394.30	General Appropriations Act 2006
LOT 4 – HEWLETT PACKARD TONER, INK AND RIBBON (1st QUARTER 2006)	P 2,684,980.10	General Appropriations Act 2006
LOT 5 – BROTHER TONER AND INK (1st QUARTER 2006)	P 1,117,129.00	General Appropriations Act 2006
LOT 6 – EPSON RIBBON (1st QUARTER 2006)	P 589,424.00	General Appropriations Act 2006

PERIOD OF DELIVERY:

Twenty five (25) calendar days after issuance of Purchase Order (P.O.)

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

A. FOR LOT 1, LOT 2, AND LOT 3:

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference will be held on:

Date : **01 MARCH 2006, Wednesday**
Venue : Conference Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Building, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Ermita Manila
Time 1:00 p.m. (for LOT 1)
2:00 p.m. (for LOT 2)
3:00 p.m. (for LOT 3)

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS

On the bidding, the legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative, and the bids will be opened, thereafter, in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, to be held on:

Date **15 March 2006, Wednesday**
Venue Conference Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Building, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Time 10:00 a.m. (for LOT 1)
11:00 a.m. (for LOT 2)
1:00 p.m. (for LOT 3)

B. FOR LOT 4, LOT 5, AND LOT 6:

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference will be held on:

Date : **03 MARCH 2006, Friday**
Venue : Conference Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Building, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Time 1:00 p.m. (for LOT 4)
2:00 p.m. (for LOT 5)
3:00 p.m. (for LOT 6)

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS

On the bidding, the legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative, and the bids will be opened, thereafter, in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, to be held on:

Date . **17 March 2006, Friday**
Venue : Conference Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Building, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Time : 10:00 a.m. (for LOT 4)
11:00 a.m. (for LOT 5)
1:00 p.m. (for LOT 6)

Prospective bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the Committee on Bids or its Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

Interested bidders may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from **The Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, 3rd Floor Annex Building, Supreme Court**, after payment of a non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) for LOT 1, LOT 2, LOT 3, LOT 4, and LOT 5, and Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) for LOT 6**, prior to the conduct of pre-bid conference. For additional information, the bidders may contact the **Secretary, Atty. Ennar R.C. Cabanilla at telefax no. 525-1270 or Ms. Norma C. Josue at tel. no. 526-6419.**

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to: 1) reject any or all bids, 2) waive any defects or informalities therein, 3) or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be the most advantageous and beneficial to the government.

15 February 2006

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman

(PDI–Feb 15 & 22, 2006)

PNOC

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. No. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 • Fax 840-1575

Section I, Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Nasulo Geothermal Power Plant Project (Full Turnkey 20 MW Geothermal Power Plant)
EDC 06-009

1. PNOC - Energy Development Corporation invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Nasulo Geothermal Power Plant Project (Full Turnkey 20 MW Geothermal Power Plant) under project number EDC 06-009 having an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of Philippine Peso Two Billion One Hundred Sixty-Five Million Six Hundred Thousand (PhP 2,165,600,000.00) Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening
2. PNOC - Energy Development Corporation now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Nasulo Geothermal Power Plant Project (Full Turnkey 20 MW Geothermal Power Plant) (EDC 06-009) Application for eligibility may be secured from Contracts Admin Group for a non refundable fee of US Dollars Five Hundred (US$ 500.00) The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents which is on 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Admin. Group Office Wall Clock Time) of February 27, 2006 (Monday) at Board Room, Fourth Floor, Building V, Energy Compound, Merritt Road Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act." In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened In accordanc with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification
4. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at Contracts Admin. Group, First Floor, Building V, Energy Compound, Merritt Road Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila on or before 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Admin. Group Office Wall Clock Time) of February 27, 2006 (Monday)
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from PNOC-Energy Development Corporation and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. starting on the day of the issuance of the bidding documents, which is on March 6, 2006
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of US Dollars Two Thousand (US$ 2,000.00) The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative
7. PNOC-Energy Development Corporation will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on 10:00 a.m. of March 13, 2006 (Monday) at the Board Room, Fourth Floor, Building V, Energy Compound, Merritt Road Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Admin. Group Office Wall Clock Time) of May 5, 2006 (Friday) All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and in an amount stated in the Bidding Documents Late Bids shall not be accepted Bid opening shall be immediately after the deadline of submission of bids at the Board Room, Fourth Floor, Building V, Energy Compound, Merritt Road Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to witness said activity
9. PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
c/o The Bids and Awards Committee
Building V Energy Compound Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila
(632) 893 6001
cag@energy.com.ph
(632) 840 1461
www.energy.com.ph

(Sgd.) **FRANCIS M. DOLOR**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 8 & 15, 2006)

PNOC

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO, Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47 / 893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors, registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category C & D, IAC Sub-Category- Small B for General Engineering or General Building, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

CONSTRUCTION OF CABLE TRAY SUPPORTS FOR THE AIRLINE, ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, AND INSTRUMENTATION & CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE NORTHERN NEGROS GEOTHERMAL PROJECT - FLUID COLLECTION AND REINJECTION SYSTEM (NNGP - FCRS)
EDC 06-013

The Approved Budget is **PhP 4,565,284.92** chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 60 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and bid documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o Francis T. Tolibas local 5179) starting **February 8, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00)**.

Site inspection is on **February 16, 2006, 10:00 A.M.** at the Northern Negros Geothermal Project, Negros Occidental. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held also on **February 16, 2006, 1:30 P.M.** at the Construction Division Staffhouse, Northern Negros Geothermal Project, Negros Occidental.

Sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, PNOC-EDC, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of March 3, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC - EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 8 & 15, 2006)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5291 / 5279 / 5282

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REBID / BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

	Approved Budget
46,030 bags of Class "G" Cement under FGK 40836	*PHP 13,940,000.00*
Various Shaffer Parts under FDB 53484	*PHP 4,250,000.00*
Various Shaffer Parts under FDB 53483	*PHP 2,800,000.00*
124 drums of Mud Defoamer under FGK 50531	*PHP 2,952,000.00*

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance upon payment of a non-refundable fee at the above address based on the following schedules:

PR No.	Date of Issue	Cost per Document	Contact Person
FGK 40836	February 8, 2006	PHP 400.00	Mr. Harold T. Fontillas loc. 5291
FDB 53484	February 9, 2006	PHP 400.00	Ms. Eloisa J. Hulana loc. 5279
FDB 53483	February 9, 2006	PHP 400.00	Ms. Eloisa J. Hulana loc. 5279
FGK 50531	February 8, 2006	PHP 400.00	Ms. Ma. Cristina Lynn M. Mercado loc. 5282

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall also be held on February 16, 2006 for FGK 40836 and FDB 53484 and on February 17, 2006 for FDB 53483 and FGK 50531, 2:00 p.m. at the above address

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Procurement Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Procurement Department Wall Clock Time) of March 2, 2006 for FGK 40836 and FDB 53484, and March 3, 2006 for FDB 53483 and FGK 50531 Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter Late bids shall not be accepted

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission / execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 8 & 15, 2006)

PHILIPPINE CARABAO CENTER
Department of Agriculture
ISO 9001, 2000 CERTIFIED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

February 6, 2006

The Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, invites suppliers/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project described below:

Name of Project : **"Sustainable System of Propagation for Superior Genetics Dairy Buffaloes for Smallhold Farmers"**
Location : **PCC National Gene Pool and Headquarters, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija**
Brief Description : **Supply 500 heads crossbreds (PCxMB) carabaos**
Approved Budget for the Contract : **P12,500,000.00**
Contract Duration : **150 calendar days**
Delivery Period : **60 calendar days**

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conferences, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 27 to March 3, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference (Madamba Hall PCC Headquarters and Gene Pool, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija)	March 22, 2006 (2:00 p.m.)
3 Opening of Bids (Madamba Hall PCC Headquarters and Gene Pool, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija)	April 3, 2006 (2.00 p.m.)
4. Bid Evaluation	April 4 to 18, 2006
5. Post-qualification	April 19 to 25, 2006
6. Notice of Award	15 calendar days after Post Qualification period

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the PCC Cashier.

PCC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of bid.

(Sgd.) EULOGIO M. MONTEALTO
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 8 & 15, 2006)

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Deposit Amount	Interest Rates %		
In Pesos	30 - day	60 - day	90 - day
100,000 - 499,999	5.500	5.625	5.750
500,000 - 999,999	5.750	6.000	6.250
1.0MM - 4.99MM	6.000	6.250	6.500
5.0MM - 9.99MM	6.375	6.500	6.625
10.0MM and up	6.500	6.625	6.750

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Canada firms eye RP investment

Mission looking at former US military bases as possible sites

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CANADIAN INVESTORS ARE ON THE LOOKout for possible sites for Filipino-Canadian firms.

Armand Arreza, administrator of Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said yesterday that a business mission was in the country to look at the suitability of former American military bases as investment locations.

The mission included representatives from 25 organizations that belong to the Philippine Chamber of Commerce of Toronto; Philippine-Canada Business Council; and Manitoba Business Council.

Led by Fil-Canadians, the six-day business tour kicked off last Monday with a visit to the Subic freeport.

The mission will also visit Camp John Hay in Baguio City and Clark Field in Pampanga, as well as tourist destinations like Bohol, Boracay in Aklan and Cebu.

"The (visitors) broached the idea of investing in a retirement village for Canadians who find the Philippines a very suitable place to spend their twilight years," Arreza said.

He added that Subic was "conducive for retirees due to its security, accessibility, natural attractions, amenities, activities and a 24-hour medical team to ensure that retirees would certainly feel at home."

Arreza said Subic already host three retirement enclaves that cater to the Japanese market.

Relatedly, Arreza said the Philippine Retirement Authority on Monday scouted for a location in Subic suitable for yet another retirement village for Japanese citizens.

PRA is a government agency mandated to attract foreign nationals and former Filipino citizens to spend their retirement years in the country.

The agency's thrust is to help accelerate economic development, contribute to the foreign currency reserve, and provide the most attractive package for foreigner-retirees.

The Subic administrator said PRA Chair Edgardo Aglipay planned to tap private firms for the marketing and operation of the venture.

The PRA is considering large parcels of land, like those in the Greyback area in Binictican, the Kalayaan housing area and an area beside the former George Dewey High School.

An official familiar with the matter said PRA and SBMA were expected to sign a memorandum of agreement for a retirement project within the month.

A LEISURE STROLL TO
Galleria

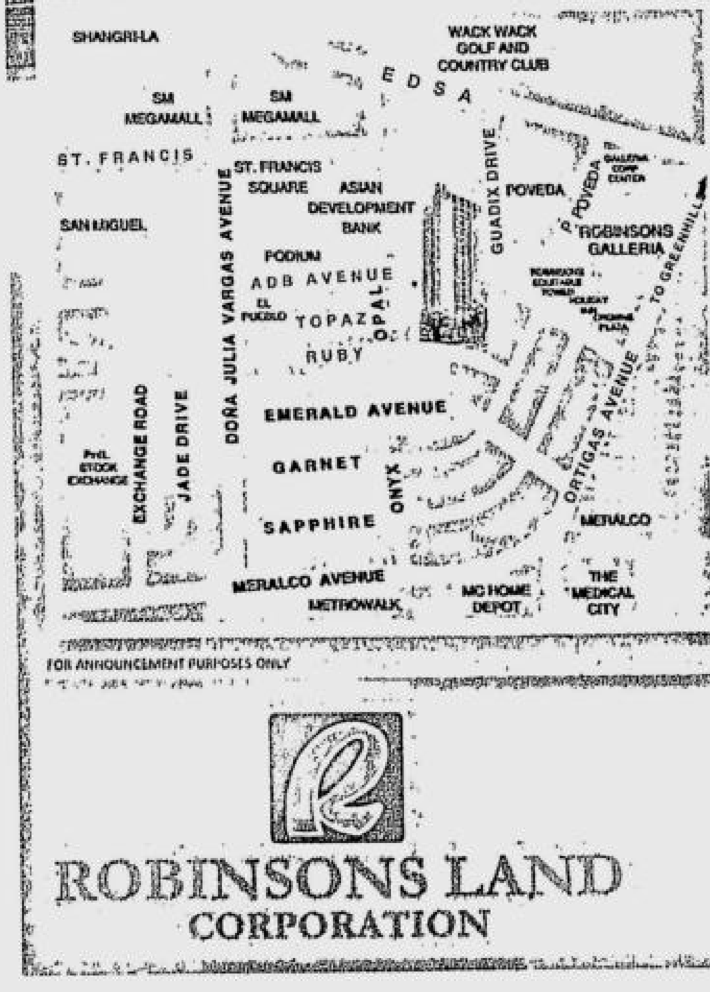
EAST
OF
GALLERIA
ROBINSONS
Galleria

A unique and refreshing lifestyle is now here in the heart of Ortigas Center.

Welcome to East of Galleria, a 45-storey residential tower located in the midst of the bustling business district. It is conveniently located beside the very successful Robinsons Galleria Mall to cater to the residents' daily needs. Minutes away from major roads like EDSA and C-5, it is also within the vicinity of malls, banks, institutions and other major establishments.

East of Galleria truly embodies the ideal of comfort and convenience, offering the best of both worlds with the choice of either bi-level or loft-type units. Available in one, two and three-bedroom units, East of Galleria assures residents of utmost privacy in condo living as the master's bedroom is located a level above the dining, kitchen and living areas. High ceilings, airy atmosphere and expansive glass windows feature breathtaking views of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club as well as a multitude of magnificent skylines.

At the heart of the busy city lies a comfortable and affordable home, here at East of Galleria.



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www.robinsonsproperties.com.ph E-mail: hrbdsales@robinsonsland.com
636-0888 • 0922 8380888

The Amenity Zone:

Only at East of Galleria

When poet Walt Whitman wrote "I sing the body electric" he could have been referring about Robinsons Land's latest opus, the East of Galleria's 4th level amenity zone. [illegible] 38 sqm [illegible] 1 BR [illegible] storey residential tower [illegible] enjoy a different experience [illegible] with an impeccable array of [illegible] one can completely wish for.

Aptly called the "Zone" by one of the leading innovators in property development, the 4th level was exclusively designed for residents to enjoy and have that frolic: Videoke, 8-Ball Billiards, Poker Games, Wi-Fi use and Pool experience anytime, anyday.

A unique combination of choice amenities only the Condominium Developer of Choice can bring. Robinsons Land Corporation (RLC) made sure that all amenities are tucked inside one floor for the whole family and friends to while time and enjoy: like the swimming pool, landscaped garden, fitness center and much more.

Take a look at the modern game room fitted to satisfy every whim. Decked with wood paneling, a leather couch and [illegible] here one can find a standard 8-ball billiard and two tournament size multifunctional tables that can satisfy [illegible] like Poker, Backgammon, Mahjong and more.

[illegible] the two (2) videoke rooms with a seating capacity of ten (10) persons [illegible] virtually transform an ordinary [illegible] hidden talent whether it's Alto or Baritone to a lingering singing passion. The two videoke rooms which can be adjoined are equipped with modern facilities and sound equipment to match one's artistic expression that could lead to heart's delight. A popular entertainment for families, lovers & friends alike but recently limited by commercial bars, lounges and shopping arcades. Videoke passion is here [illegible] your home 24/7 at East of Galleria.

"Knowing the value of family bonding, the difficulty of arranging times and entertaining friends, Robinsons Land made it possible at East of Galleria," said Mr. Danilo R. Ignacio, RLC's General Manager for High Rise Buildings Division.

Right at the heart of Ortigas Center, East of Galleria is just a block away from the successful Robinsons Galleria Mall. A well-thought property that offers excellent location, panoramic view, affordability and great living [illegible] a vibrant life.

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Prom-tastic!

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IT'S PROM TIME ONCE again! 2bU! wants to become a part of your special night. We have beauty tips and dress suggestions for girls. We even went to a fashion show to pick out numbers that would add oomph to your prom moment. And if you join our special prom contest, you have a chance of winning a great prize: having Shu Uemura's Xeng Zulueta do your makeup on the night of your prom!

We don't want to leave the guys out, either. We have prom dos and don'ts to make sure your prom goes smoothly and your night is as memorable as possible. Enjoy!

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GLAM up in a black-and-white dress with matching gloves for a classy look.

Princess for a day

Text by Allison W. Lopez
Photos by Rudy Esperas

FOR A DRESS YOU'D probably wear only once or twice in your life, how much would you (or your parents) spend?

Not much, we guess, especially since you'd need matching shoes, bag, accessories, plus some prepping up for the big night. Whew.

SM Department Store, fortunately, offers more choices to budget-conscious teens in need of a quick but sensible fix.

Veering from its previous "safer" styles, SM's prom collection '06 is indeed promising—with more sorbet colors, exciting twists, even daring cuts.

At the recent fashion show at SM Makati to launch the new line, pretty young things from different schools romped in mostly tube or spaghetti-strapped, multilayered dresses. Flounce skirts also dominated the collection, while classic, black-and-white striped dresses with satin ribbons cinched at the waist stood out.

What must be the biggest surprise was a tiered dress with uneven hemline, cut dangerously above the thighs. The model seems to have worn one of the samples that were a tad smaller, but the actual merchandise's hemlines are said to have been lowered already. So girls, make sure the dress fits well especially since they only come in small, medium and large. There are no plus-sizes yet for this collection. Adjustments would also have to be done outside.

Cocktail dresses, other semi-formals and clubwear (like cute bubble skirts) are also available at the girl's teen wear section. Matching shoes, bags and accessories such as tiaras and headbands can also be found at the store's other sections.

Young gentlemen would have to content themselves with the usual suits and barongs the store has since these were not included in the prom collection.

At P999.75-P1,499.75, the young ladies' formals are a good steal especially when your prom is just three days away. There may also

PRINCESS/ C2

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0919, Series of 2006

CELEBRITY model Pia Romero looks every inch a princess in a light-pink frock and bejeweled headband.

SAY hello to a lemon-yellow gown that flatters fair young ladies.

DASHING Dominic Roco in a bright-on-dark ensemble

STRAPLESS two-tone formal

EMPIRE-CUT, shimmery number with ribbon accent

SIMPLE peach confection

SM Department Store and Avel Bacudio join forces to make every teenager's dream night come true

Princess for a day

From page C1

be a chance you'd run into somebody wearing the same thing, so make sure to add a dash of accessories to personalize your outfit.

Semi-haute couture

If, however, your parents have a few thousands more to spare for their *unica hija*, Avel Bacudio's special prom line for SM is the perfect choice. The 29-year-old designer deftly produced lovely separates in dyed chiffon and duchess satin, albeit on short notice.

"You can even mix and match it," suggests Bacudio, so that instead of slipping into an all-pink or all-blue gown, you can choose the aqua tube top to go with the pink skirt instead.

Bacudio says he created classic embellished tops with skirts that have unconventional features like torn fringes. The designer also made it a point to incorporate a drawstring back so the wearer can adjust it to the right fit.

His prom collection will be displayed only at SM Makati, and has one small, two mediums, one large sizes in stock. If none of these princess-y frocks on the rack fit snugly, you can contact Bacudio (tel. 4350578) for a fitting or some alterations and just wait for three days to get the outfit.

BACUDIO pairs a classic tube top with an unconventional "torn" skirt for an updated prom look.

DRAWSTRING back makes it easy to get the right fit.

LITTLE black dress with dainty ribbon belt

AN EQUALLY stunning version of the black-and-white '50s-inspired dress

BUBBLE skirts are perfect for the after-party.

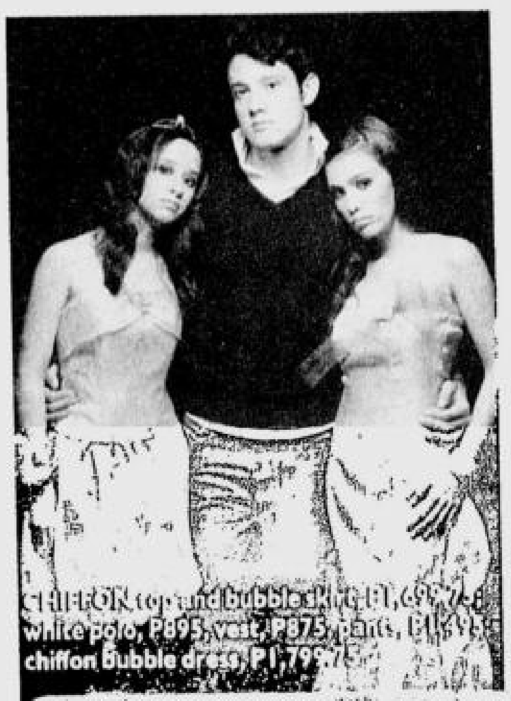
The designer's dresses carried by SM will set you back around P15,000—definitely not cheap, but still, it's half of what he usually charges for a made-to-order prom dress. Bacudio also offers tailored *barongs* and suits for guys who want something more than the usual.

And before we forget, you'll also get a 20-percent discount on hair and makeup at David's Salon for every purchase at the Girl's Teen Wear in all SM branches.

Isn't that just great? Now you can get those sexy curly locks via digital perm at a steal, too.

These days, it does pay to be practical—especially when you have irresistible choices like these.

PRETTY-IN-PINK creation by young designer Avel Bacudio



CHIFFON top and bubble skirt, P1,69[illegible]; white polo, P895; vest, P875; pants, P1,[illegible]; chiffon bubble dress, P1,799.7[illegible]

STRAPLESS rainbow chiffon dress with asymmetrical hem, P1,899.75; cowl-neck rainbow chiffon dress, P1,799.75

MONOCHROMATIC chiffon dress, P1,599.75; polo with cotton tapes, P925; monochromatic chiffon halter dress, P1,599.75

Knockout ensembles

THE INGREDIENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL prom are simple: chin-up confidence, a standout style, the perfect dress and a hottie for a date.

Twenty-Two BC shows that your prom doesn't have to be a minor "Stepford Wives" party, where you abandon your own style for a night just to blend in. In fact, it can really be fun dressing up for the ball if you stick to the look you're most comfortable in. Here are some ideas to help you out.

Pretty and romantic. Laces and ribbons in pastels, a sweet corsage, pretty makeup and a charming smile. Get romantic in a strapless dress that shows off your shoulders. Feel like Cinderella as you enter the scene.

Classic elegance. When there's no need to try so hard to catch attention since your mere presence is all the party needs, relax in a sophisticated dress that allows you to move around in a style that's truly yours.

City chic. For no-nonsense gals who wouldn't be caught wearing an off-season outfit, a halter top that spells sexy, bold and confident is the best bet. Wear a short tea-length dress to show everyone that you are about to enjoy the night big time!

Fabulously eclectic. —Hate to conform? Play the big night in a daring and unexpected piece. Try a tie-dyed dress that's edgy enough for disco dancing yet soft enough to make your date drool during the slow dance.

Minimalist glam. Simplicity and glam go together. A minimal yet stunning ball gown, a smashing hairstyle, and a poised walk are all you need as you face the crowd as prom queen.

Still, whatever style you choose, remember that enjoying the night is all that matters.

Twenty-Two BC also offers loads of privileges: free alteration services on all regular-priced items; a lifetime 10-percent discount card upon accumulation of P8,000 worth of purchase; a 20-percent birthday discount for those in the mailing list; store and event notification through mailers, e-mail, and text; and a 24-hour hotline for queries, suggestions, and complaints (0916-6957273).

Visit Twenty-Two B.C. only at the SM Department Store Boutique Squares of the following SM Malls: SM City North Edsa, SM Makati, SM Cubao, SM Megamall, SM Manila, SM City Cebu, SM Bacoor, SM Fairview, SM Southmall, SM City Mandurriao, Harrison Plaza and SM Mall of Asia-Bay City. Visit www.22bc.com.ph.

To know more about Solo's latest collection, visit www.solo.com.ph, or visit the following branches: Glorietta 1, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Sta. Rosa, SM Centerpoint, SM Manila, SM Pampanga, Alimall Cubao, Festival Super Mall and Abanao Square Baguio.

GOWNS BY TWENTY-TWO BC
MEN'S OUTFITS BY SOLO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEN GO
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ERICA PAREDES
STYLING BY ANNE BELLA
MODELED BY MAFFY SOLER, STEPH AFZELIUS
AND MIKE JUNGSCHLAGER OF CAL CARRIE'S

Stylish retail choices

WITH PROM SEASON fast approaching, it's time for teenagers to comb the metro in search of the perfect outfit for that one special night.

For teens (and parents) who don't want to blow a lot of time and money having a gown or suit made, buying retail is the more practical choice.

Debenhams, one of the U.K.'s largest retail stores, is holding an in-store promo for loyal fans until Feb. 25. For a minimum purchas buyers are entitled to a gift certi cate to make their prom nigh more special.

THOMAS Nash formal shirts

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Bianca Consunji

CLEAN and flattering style lines with just the right touch of detail and color, from Debenhams' Debut Womenswear

Hi-tech hair

Take a break from shampoo commercial-straight hair. This year, curly is the way to go

By Pam Pastor

YOU KNOW YOU'RE LIVING IN A hi-tech world when even salons go digital.

If you're sick of spending tedious hours having your hair rebonded, if your straight hair has become blah and boring, if you want to breathe life into your limp locks, here are two words for you: digital perm.

Yes, digital perm, not your regular run-of-the-mill perm. What's the difference, you might wonder. "The curls are shinier. They're bigger. There's movement so it looks sexier. *Mas may* bounce and there's no frizz," said Cherry Reyes, who runs Essensuals Toni & Guy in 6750.

And, unlike the regular perm, your digital perm will last for only three months, which means you're not tied down to a lifetime of curliness—you can change your mind.

The secret lies in the process and in the tools used. "We use ceramic rods—they seal the moisture in the hair so the hair doesn't become frizzy," Cherry said.

Digital perm isn't the only thing that makes Essensuals Toni & Guy different from your regular salon. They offer a unique experience—from start to finish.

Clients are welcomed with a lovely massage, thanks to physical therapists who are part of the salon's staff. The salon also has private rooms—complete with your own cable TV—if you want to enjoy your treatments away from everyone else.

And if your treatment crosses into lunchtime, Glorietta and its whole myriad of restaurants are just a few steps away—you can always have food delivered or someone can pick up lunch for you.

The digital perm starts with a shampoo and a cut. Layers need to be added to your hair to show off the curls properly. It's important for the hair to be cut before the perm because cutting the hair after would make the curls pop.

Pre-perm solution is then added to your hair. Then another solution follows—one that softens the hair so your stylist can mold it into beautiful curls after.

Another thing which makes the digital perm different from the regular perm is that the solution is washed off before the actual perming starts.

Perm proper

The ceramic rods are then secured to your hair and covered with asbestos pads to protect your scalp from the heat. This is where the digital part comes in—each ceramic rod is hooked up to a heating machine.

The waiting time will depend on the texture of your hair. I have unbelievably thick hair so my time was a little longer than normal. After the rods are removed, the hair is washed and blown dry again and neutralizer is applied. Then, your beautiful curls will be revealed.

You can request for smaller or bigger curls. Hair products to keep your curls in tip-top shape will be recommended.

I've been using Bed Head's Small Talk and I love it equally for its effects and its delicious grape bubble gum smell.

I've also happily discovered that even during the few times I forgot to take my hair arsenal with me on out-of-town trips, my curls still look pretty even without products.

During the first few days after the perm, the curls would tighten only to become loose with the passing of days. And unlike some hair treatments with effects that fade over time—the digital perm looks better and better even as weeks pass.

After living with painstakingly rebonded hair for three years and not being able to go out of the house until every strand is dried perfectly in place, I realized with glee that digitally permed hair is wash and wear.

I can pop into the bathroom, pop back out, get ready in five minutes and run out of the house without worrying about having a massive mess on my head.

Biggest joy

Letting the air dry my hair is no longer a horrendous mistake. In fact, my biggest joy now is going out of the house in the morning with my hair in a ponytail (hair experts will cringe at the thought of pulling wet hair into a ponytail but sometimes there isn't enough time in a day) and then removing the ponytail in the afternoon or evening to reveal beautiful, perfect, sexy curls.

With the time and energy I have been saving on not having to blow-dry my hair and after discovering the joy of low (even non-) maintenance hair, I might just stay curly forever.

There are others good reasons to go back to Essensuals Toni & Guy—their stylists are trained in London (where Toni & Guy is based) before they are allowed to cut and every time they introduce a new form of treatment they are intensively trained. For the digital perm, they were trained for a week in Singapore.

Toni & Guy is also the salon to go to for crazy colors and creative looks. But above the training and skills is their obvious and genuine concern for people's hair.

No wonder a number of celebrities have made Toni & Guy their salon of choice. Christy spent extra time patiently removing a knot from the back of my head—a common problem for people with extra-thick hair.

And when a client came in, asking for a digital perm because she was unsatisfied with the perm she had at another salon just days ago, Cherry and Christy talked seriously about her case—as physicians would—before asking the woman to come back in a few weeks.

"It wouldn't be good for her hair," they said. "Besides, she wouldn't be able to fully appreciate the effects of the digital perm."

People like to think of them as stylists, I like to think of them as hair doctors.

Essensuals Toni & Guy is at G/F, 6750 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Operating hours are from 9 a.m.-8 p.m., on Mondays-Saturdays; and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Sundays. Call 8128559 or 8128002.

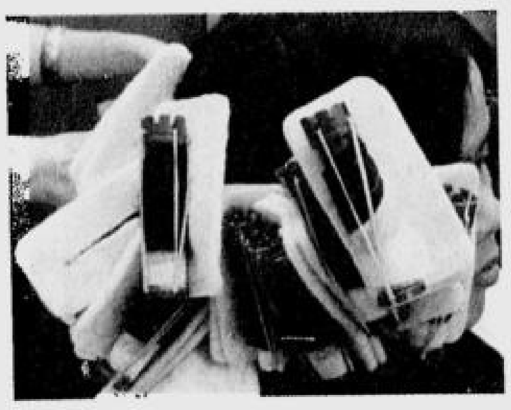
E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

THREE different looks achieved by digital perm

THE HAIR doctors are in. Essensuals Toni & Guy in 6750

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

THE AUTHOR with Cherry Reyes, Toni & Guy creative and managing director



HAIR is secured with ceramic rods and the scalp is protected with asbestos pads.

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

STYLIST Christy works her magic

Have prom-pretty hair

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR hair digitally permed for your prom, do it a few days before your special night so you can have time to adjust to your new look.

Choose a look that is both comfortable and easy to fix. Think about it: if your complex dance move shakes your hair out of place, will you be able to salvage the look in the bathroom?

Up or down? If you can't choose between a sweeping up-do or having your locks framing your face, bring a photo of your dress (or bring the dress itself) and ask your stylist to help you decide.

Schedule a salon date with friends—getting ready for the prom is half the fun and the fun would be tripled when shared with your closest girlfriends.

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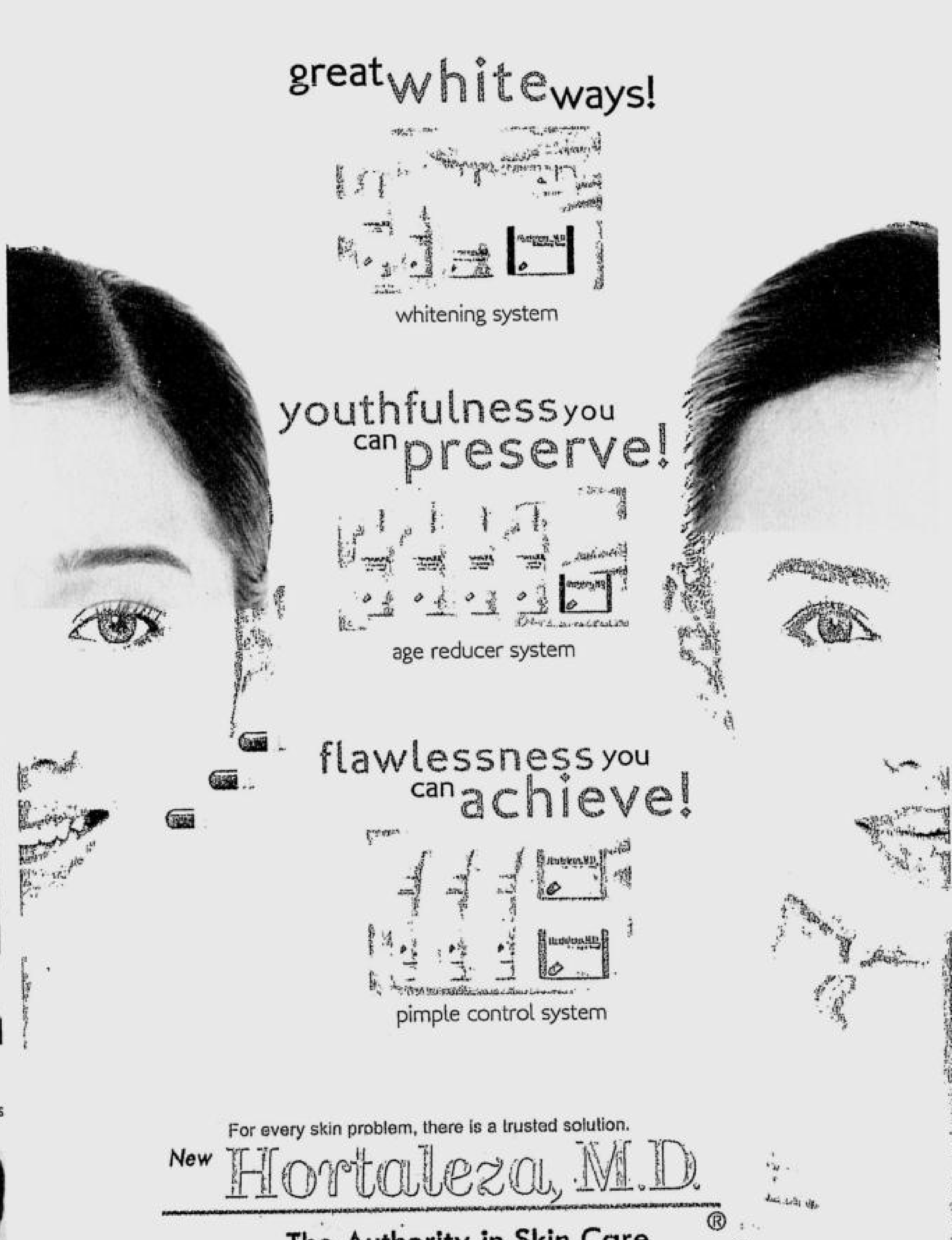

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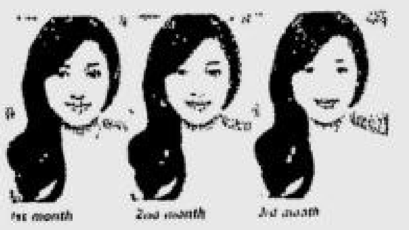

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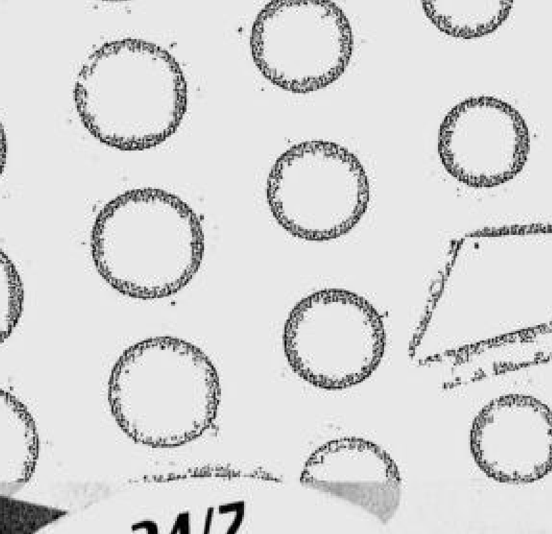
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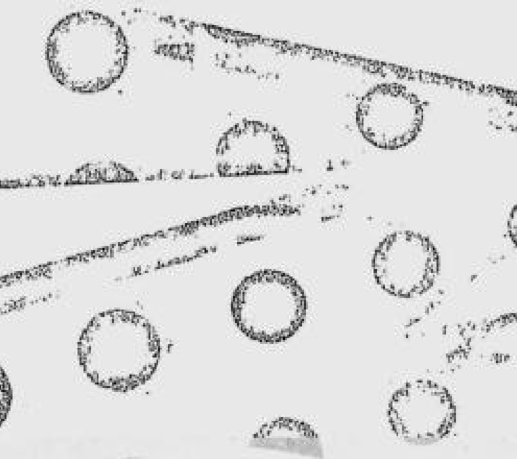
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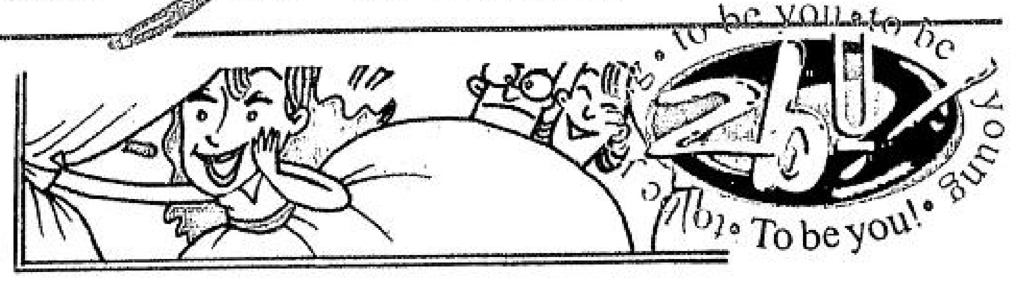
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WELCOME
Steph

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Prom dos and don'ts

By Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

IT'S THE TIME OF THE YEAR THAT EVERYone in high school has been waiting for: prom season. Whether it's sophomore night, junior prom or senior ball, everyone's excited to dress up and waltz and look like princes and princesses for the night.

To make the night as worry-free as possible, 2bU! has come up with a list of things that should—and shouldn't—be done at your formal to make sure the most highly anticipated event of the school year turns out to be the most memorable as well.

Do

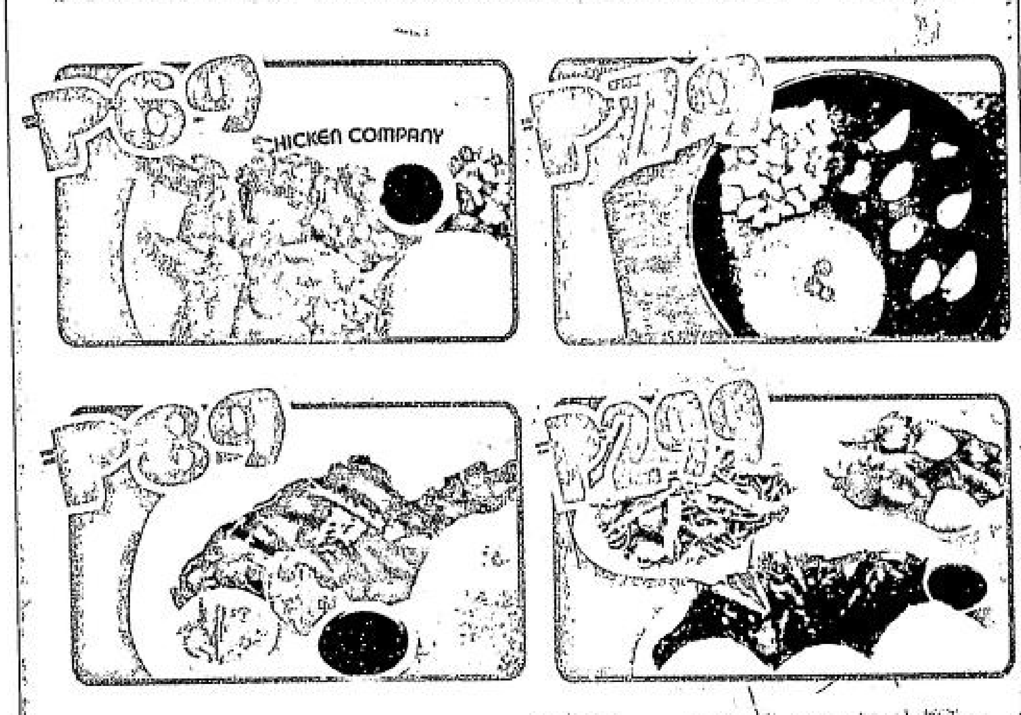
- Prepare a camera to capture the photogenic memories. Even if there is a professional photographer, it's a lot more fun to candidly capture the night. Just make sure you don't lose your camera, especially when you're out on the dance floor.
- Tell your parents where you are going and who you are going with. This way, you'll be able to have fun and not get in trouble with them afterward.
- Make sure that appointments for hair, nails, makeup, etc. are taken care of a week, or at least several days, before prom.
- Start breaking in and practice walking on prom shoes at least a week before prom so when the big night arrives, there won't be any sore feet—and a lot of tripping.
- Ask for the color of your date's dress and tux so you don't clash on the big night.
- Have spare cash just in case something pops up that might require extra money.
- Make sure everything fits in advance. Do not wait until the day before.
- Engage in good conversations with your date. If you really don't have anything to talk about, try involving the other couples at your table into a group conversation, instead of sulking at your plate.
- Have a good time, make wise choices, and enjoy yourself.

> Don't break up with your boyfriend before the prom. Do it afterward

Don't

- Forget to pick up your date.
- Forget the corsage or boutonniere.
- Ask to see your date's dress or tux before the big day… it's supposedly bad luck.
- Overdo the perfume or cologne. Please don't bathe in it.
- Tell your date that she looks better without makeup and hairspray. This is not the right time to tell her that you prefer the "natural" look.
- Sit at home and sulk, even if you don't have a date. Go stag or with a group of friends and have a blast.
- Break up with your boyfriend/girlfriend during the week of prom. If you think the breakup is coming, just bite your tongue and try to wait a few days after prom. Prom is a memory that lasts a lifetime, and you don't want it to be clouted by a bad breakup.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com.



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See mechanics poster for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No.7081 Series of 2005

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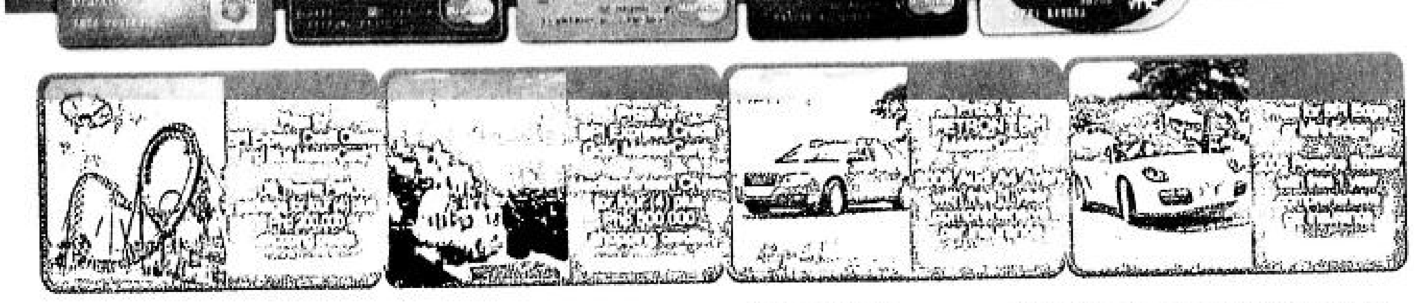

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*Actual unit may vary from photo.

BPI Express Credit's Make It Happen promotion is from November 15, 2005 to May 15, 2006.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 6503, Series of 2005

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
A tradition of leadership

PETRON
Fuel Success

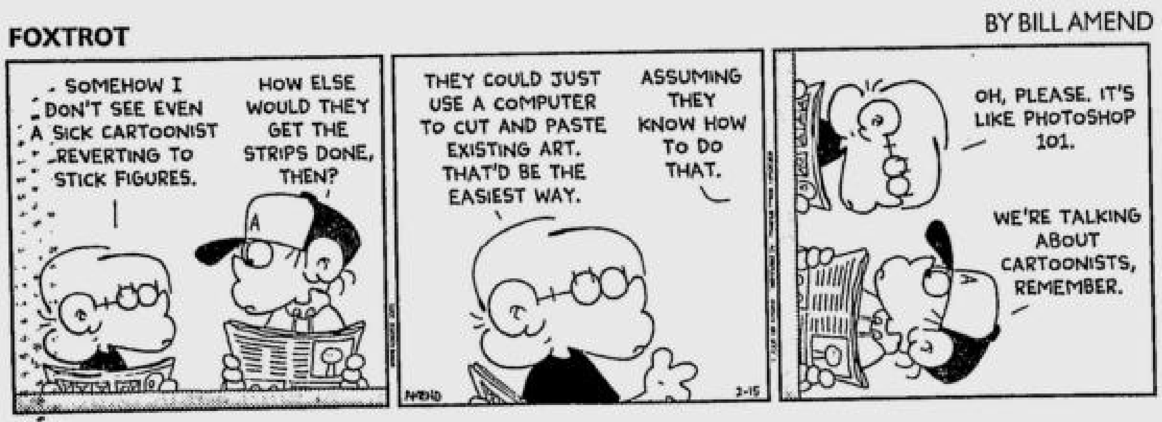
PGA Cars, Inc.
Sole importer and distributor

PORSCHE

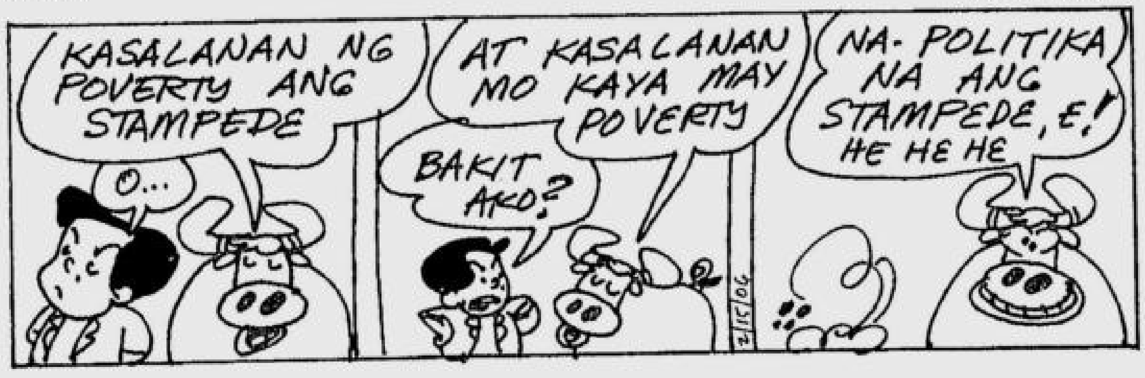
Audi

Prudential Guarantee

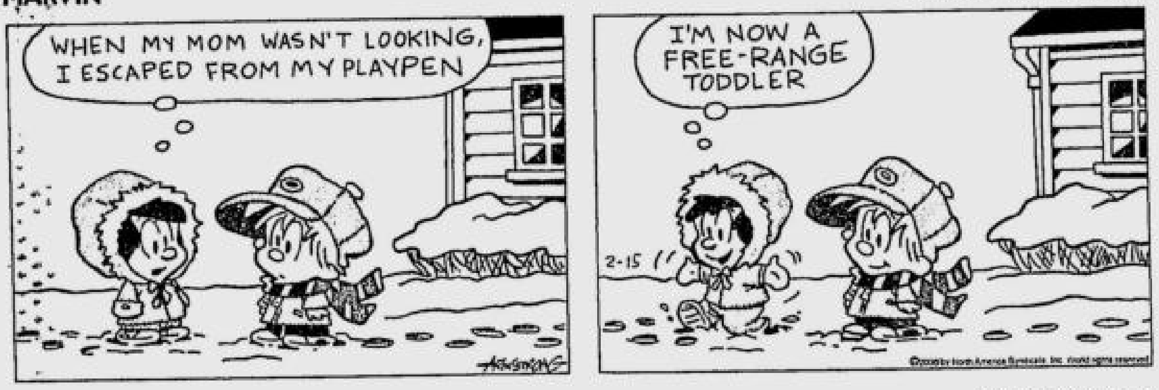
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


SOMEHOW I DON'T SEE EVEN A SICK CARTOONIST REVERTING TO STICK FIGURES.
HOW ELSE WOULD THEY GET THE STRIPS DONE, THEN?
THEY COULD JUST USE A COMPUTER TO CUT AND PASTE EXISTING ART. THAT'D BE THE EASIEST WAY.
ASSUMING THEY KNOW HOW TO DO THAT.
OH, PLEASE. IT'S LIKE PHOTOSHOP 101.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT CARTOONISTS, REMEMBER.
2-15

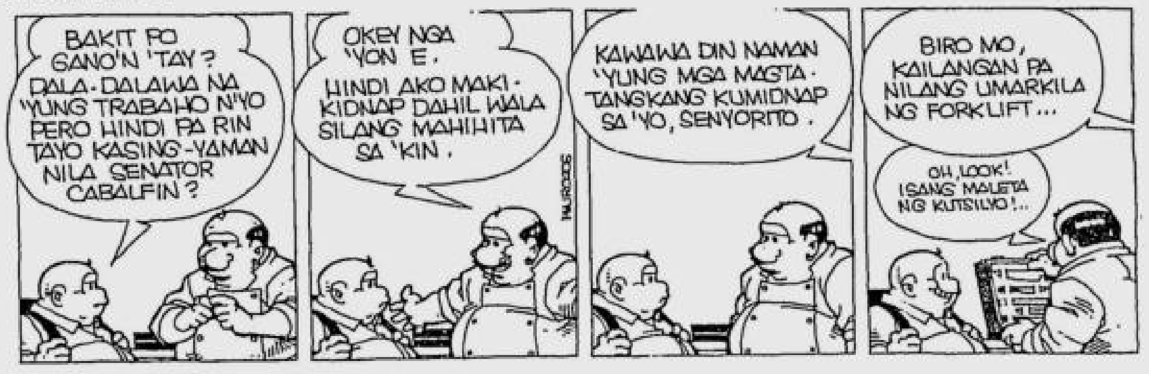
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


KASALANAN NG POVERTY ANG STAMPEDE
O...
AT KASALANAN MO KAYA MAY POVERTY
BAKIT AKO?
NA-POLITIKA NA ANG STAMPEDE, E! HE HE HE
2/15/06

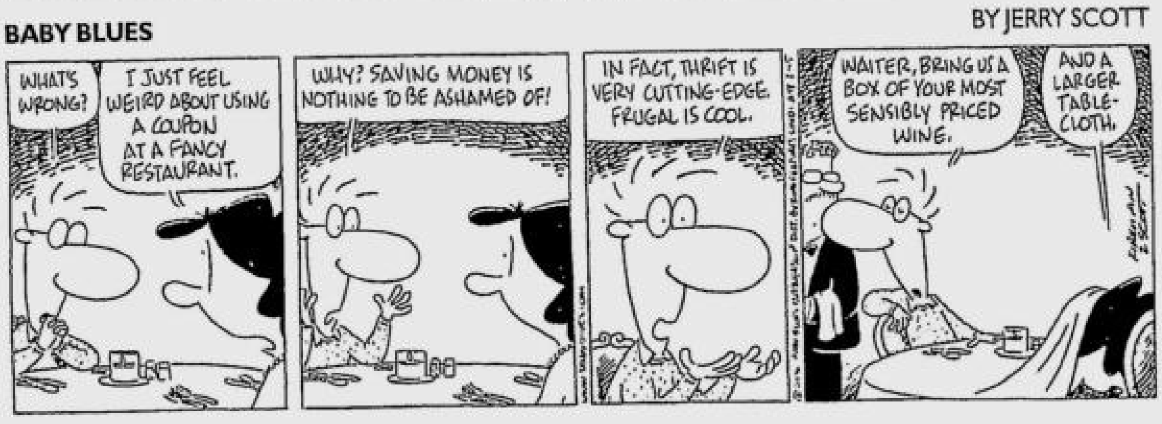
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHEN MY MOM WASN'T LOOKING, I ESCAPED FROM MY PLAYPEN
I'M NOW A FREE-RANGE TODDLER
2-15

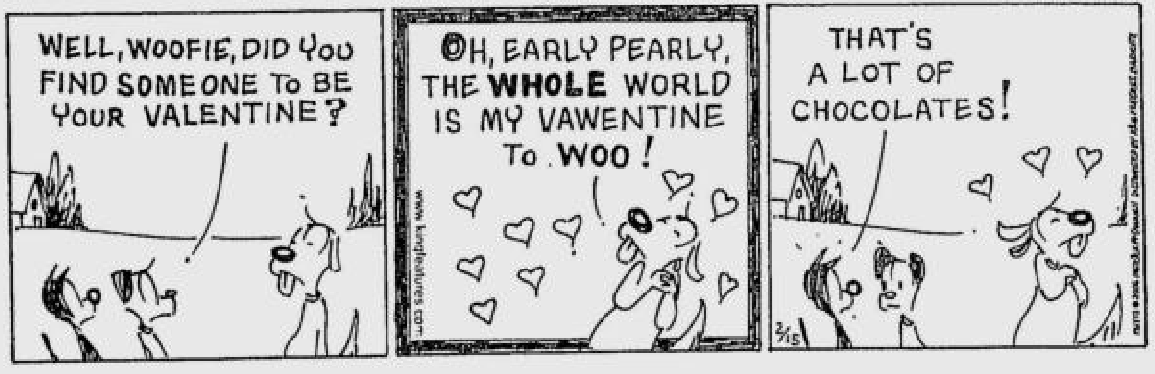
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKIT PO GANO'N 'TAY? DALA-DALAWA NA 'YUNG TRABAHO N'YO PERO HINDI PA RIN TAYO KASING-YAMAN NILA SENATOR CABALFIN?
OKEY NGA 'YON E. HINDI AKO MAKI-KIDNAP DAHIL WALA SILANG MAHIHITA SA 'KIN.
KAWAWA DIN NAMAN 'YUNG MGA MAGTA-TANGKANG KUMIDNAP SA 'YO, SENYORITO.
BIRO MO, KAILANGAN PA NILANG UMARKILA NG FORKLIFT...
OH, LOOK! ISANG MALETA NG KUTSILYO!...

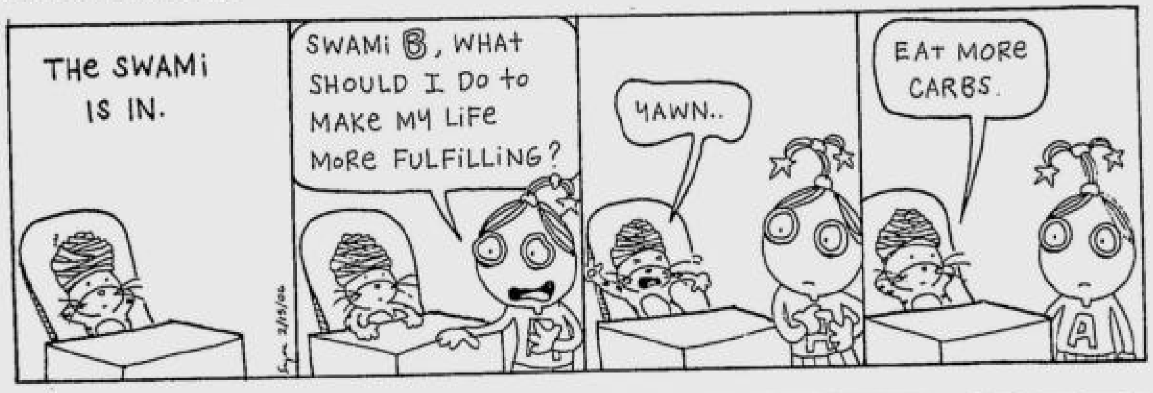
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S WRONG?
I JUST FEEL WEIRD ABOUT USING A COUPON AT A FANCY RESTAURANT.
WHY? SAVING MONEY IS NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF!
IN FACT, THRIFT IS VERY CUTTING-EDGE. FRUGAL IS COOL.
WAITER, BRING US A BOX OF YOUR MOST SENSIBLY PRICED WINE.
AND A LARGER TABLE-CLOTH.

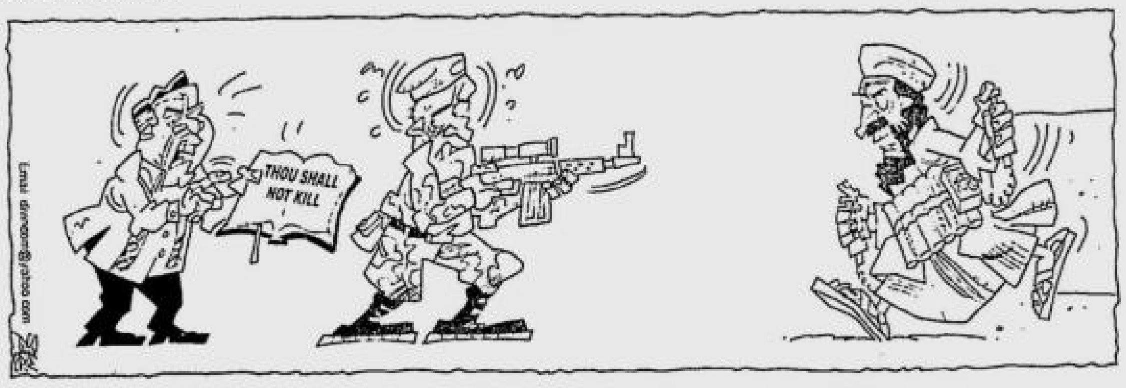
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WELL, WOOFIE, DID YOU FIND SOMEONE TO BE YOUR VALENTINE?
OH, EARLY PEARLY, THE WHOLE WORLD IS MY VAWENTINE TO WOO!
THAT'S A LOT OF CHOCOLATES!
2/15

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


THE SWAMI IS IN.
SWAMI B, WHAT SHOULD I DO TO MAKE MY LIFE MORE FULFILLING?
YAWN..
EAT MORE CARBS.

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THOU SHALL NOT KILL

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Your curiosity takes you to strange places. You have a fine mind, and often put an entirely original twist on things. You like to experiment to discover new ways of doing things. You enjoy nature, and you love a good joke. Increased solitude in the year ahead will help you learn something new. You'll welcome this!
Birthdate of: Matt Groening, producer/writer; Jane Seymour, actress; Galileo Galilei, scientist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be surprised by the raw truth that you learn from a friend or a member of a group today. Nevertheless, the truth is always better than a lie, isn't it?

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It pleases you to see new ways of using old resources. Perhaps you will discover new applications for things you thought were useless or obsolete.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your naturally curious nature helps you see a new philosophy or way of thinking about something today. Keep an open mind. Fresh truths are revealed to you now.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent day to do research or delve deeply for answers you seek. You could learn a new way of doing something that might be handy for you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your willingness to be truthful with someone close to you can take a relationship to a new level. A deeper honesty simply promotes a deeper appreciation and stronger sense of trust.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be open to entirely new methods of doing things at work today. This might involve letting go or getting rid of previous standards or equipment.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't be critical of children today. Remember that you were once a child yourself. Try to understand what others need.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to get rid of whatever you don't need at home. Tackle garbage areas, bathroom areas and laundry. Your aim is to make big improvements at home—and you can succeed!

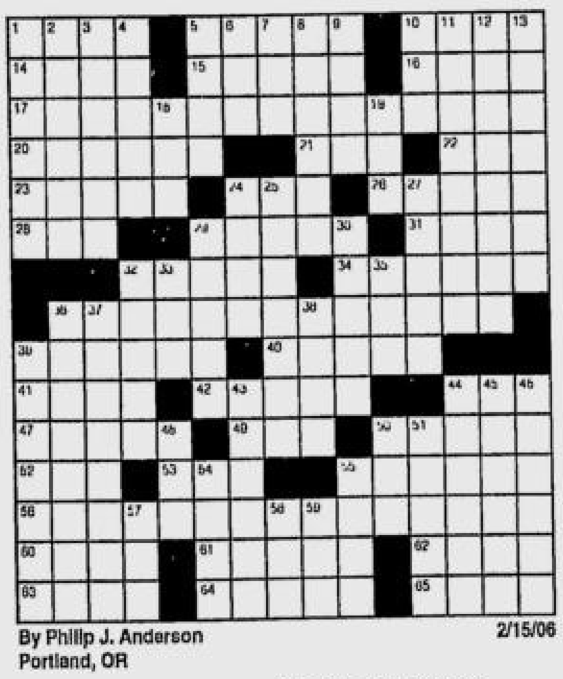
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might buy something new today or hear advice from someone that alters your appearance for the better. Don't be afraid to follow a hot tip.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want to use your money in a useful, productive way today. You want to buy something that is going to improve your life. You might also see new ways of earning money.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're on a new self-improvement kick. You want to look better and relate better to everyone you know. You want to be a better person!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your ability to discover secrets is amazing now. Use this ability to research things at work. You might also use this ability to discover skeletons in the closet. (Oops.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
2/15/06

ACROSS
1 Labels
5 Glacial ice mass
10 Khayyam of Persia
14 Woody's son
15 Muse of poetry
16 On the __ (declining)
17 Angels' place
20 Yeast
21 Louis or Carrie
22 Golfer Trevino
23 Fragrant compound
24 Lode's yield
26 French psychoanalyst Jacques
28 Souse's syndrome
29 Formulated belief
31 Latvian, e.g.
32 Post-workout woes
34 Moralizing tales
36 Angels' place
39 Catches
40 Salacious stares
41 Cross letters
42 Spud
44 One NCO
47 Countrified
49 Old draft org.
50 Earth tone
52 Poetic pasture
53 "__ a bird..."
55 Lady at a luau
56 Angels' place
60 Nice concept?
61 Follow as a consequence
62 Kind of poker
63 Protuberance
64 Cultural values
65 Playwright Hart

DOWN
1 Set aside for later
2 Type of warrant
3 Acts the bad winner
4 Italian table wine
5 In stitches?
6 Notable period
7 Bit of hope
8 Expiated
9 Facsimile
10 Part of BYOB
11 Daily high point during basic training
12 Hardened by heat
13 Acting monarchs
18 Aachen article
19 Sushi staple
24 Hydrox alternative
25 Consequences
27 Monastery superiors
29 Storage box
30 Bid
32 Open courtyards
33 Fidel's comrade
35 Broadcast
36 Insinuation
37 Gave an account of
38 Caddie's pocketful
39 Steak choice
43 Concurrence
44 Packing label phrase
45 Gifted intellect
46 Tendencies
48 Fairway position
50 Klutz
51 Abyss
54 Biblical pronoun
55 Calamities
57 "__ Haw"
58 Axe-handle wood
59 Batman and Robin, e.g.

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	G	A	E	■	C	L	A	W	■	B	A	R	N
M	I	A	T	A	■	L	I	S	A	■	U	L	E	E
A	D	I	O	S	■	O	A	T	H	■	M	O	V	E
H	O	L	D	Y	O	U	R	H	O	R	S	E	S	■
■	■	■	D	A	H	S	■	M	O	O	T	■	■	■
P	T	A	S	■	L	E	I	A	■	L	E	G	I	T
O	H	M	■	M	O	A	N	■	C	L	E	A	V	E
K	E	E	P	Y	O	U	R	S	H	I	R	T	O	N
E	M	B	A	R	K	■	E	T	O	N	■	O	R	O
Y	E	A	S	T	■	L	D	E	R	■	B	R	Y	N
■	■	■	S	L	A	M	■	P	A	S	O	■	■	■
■	T	A	K	E	A	C	H	I	L	L	P	I	L	L
A	I	D	E	■	M	E	A	N	■	E	E	R	I	E
S	L	A	Y	■	C	E	L	T	■	D	E	M	O	S
H	E	M	S	■	O	S	L	O	■	S	P	A	N	S

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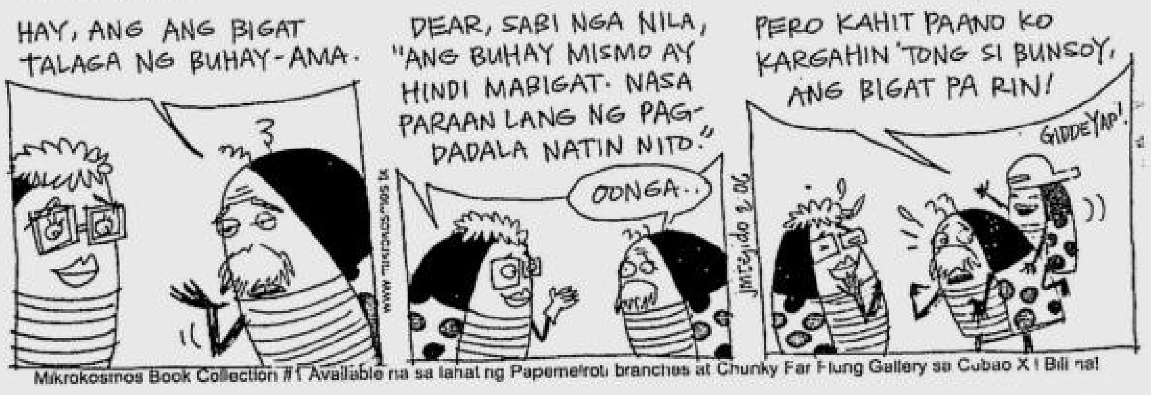
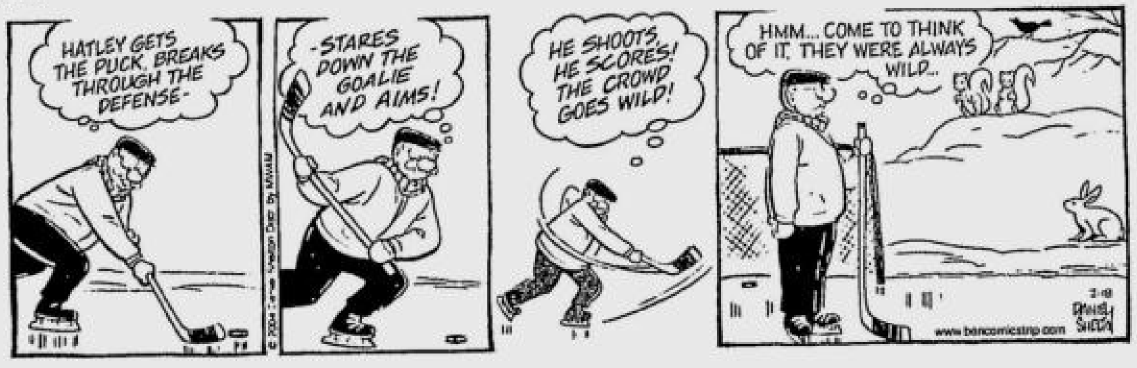
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

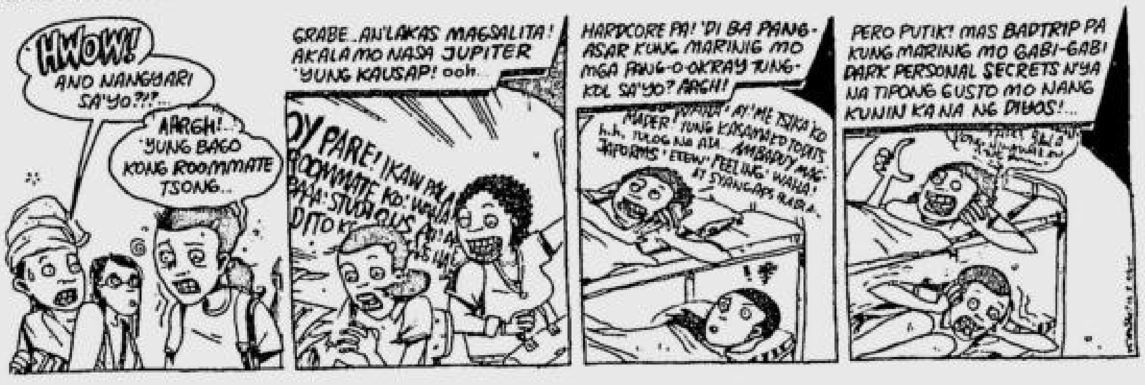

HAY, ANG ANG BIGAT TALAGA NG BUHAY-AMA.
DEAR, SABI NGA NILA, "ANG BUHAY MISMO AY HINDI MABIGAT. NASA PARAAN LANG NG PAG-DADALA NATIN NITO."
OONGA..
PERO KAHIT PAANO KO KARGAHIN 'TONG SI BUNSOY, ANG BIGAT PA RIN!
GIDDEYAP!

Mikrokosmos Book Collection #1 Available na sa lahat ng Papemelroti branches at Chunky Far Flung Gallery sa Cubao X! Bili na!

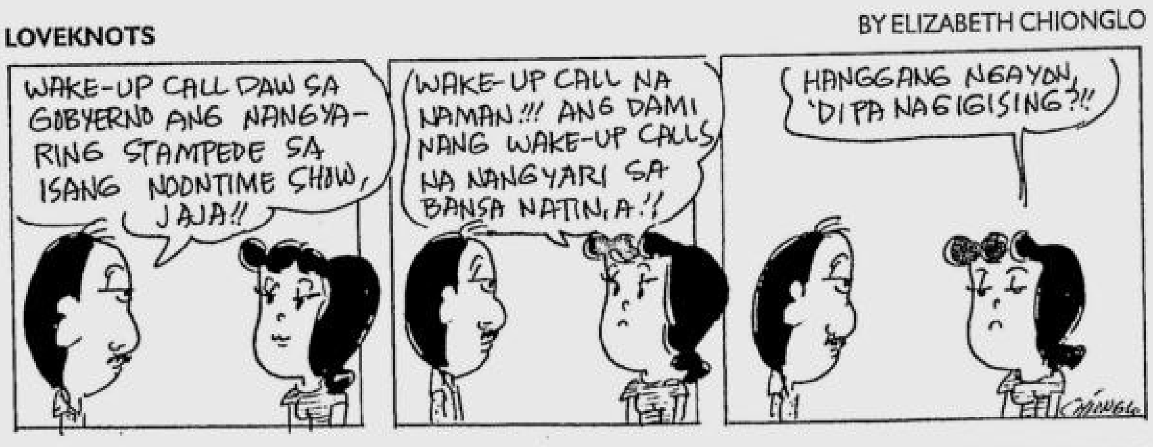
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


HATLEY GETS THE PUCK, BREAKS THROUGH THE DEFENSE-
-STARES DOWN THE GOALIE AND AIMS!
HE SHOOTS, HE SCORES! THE CROWD GOES WILD!
HMM... COME TO THINK OF IT, THEY WERE ALWAYS WILD...
www.bencomicstrip.com

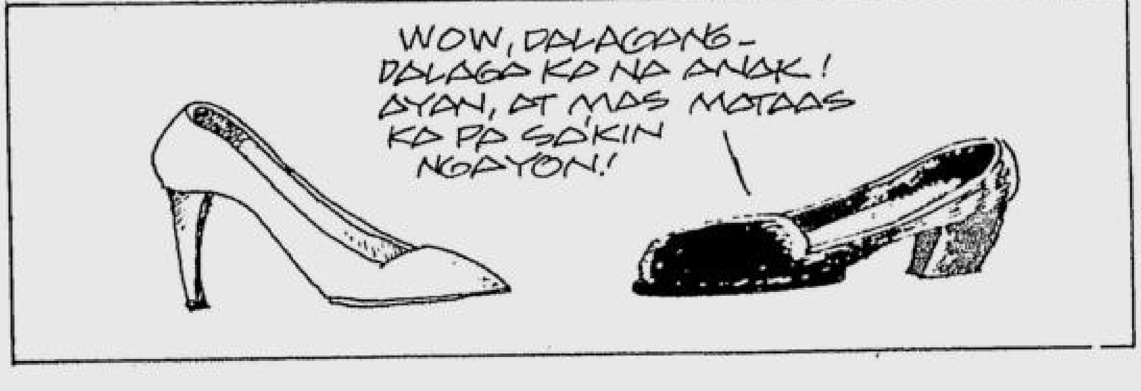
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOW! ANO NANGYARI SA'YO?!?...
AARGH! 'YUNG BAGO KONG ROOMMATE TSONG...
GRABE..AN'LAKAS MAGSALITA! AKALA MO NASA JUPITER 'YUNG KAUSAP! ooh...
OY PARE! IKAW PALA ROOMMATE KO! WAHA!
HARDCORE PA! 'DI BA PANG-ASAR KUNG MARINIG MO MGA PANG-O-OKRAY TUNGKOL SA'YO? ARGH!
PERO PUTIK! MAS BADTRIP PA KUNG MARINIG MO GABI-GABI DARK PERSONAL SECRETS N'YA NA TIPONG GUSTO MO NANG KUNIN KA NA NG DIYOS!...

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


WAKE-UP CALL DAW SA GOBYERNO ANG NANGYARING STAMPEDE SA ISANG NOONTIME SHOW, JAJA!!
WAKE-UP CALL NA NAMAN!!! ANG DAMI NANG WAKE-UP CALLS NA NANGYARI SA BANSA NATIN, A!!
HANGGANG NGAYON, 'DI PA NAGIGISING?!!

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


WOW, DALAGANG-DALAGA KA NA ANAK! AYAN, AT MAS MATAAS KA PA SA'KIN NGAYON!

Prom-perfect makeup

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Niko Cid

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, FIVE years ago. A young buck from the nearby all-boys' school stood nervously at the foot of the stairs, waiting for me to finish my graceful flight in my glittering blue gown. He looked up with tender eyes and said, "You look better without makeup."

No, the rest of the night didn't go too well, either. But while it wasn't exactly the most tactful thing in the world to say, he was right. The matte brown eye shadow, earth-toned blush and red lipstick made me look like someone else (say, somebody's spinster aunt).

While five years may not seem like such a long time, makeup styles have greatly improved since then.

For instance, it is now possible to wear bright colors such as blue, pink, orange, and green without looking like a clown. Glitter doesn't have to be gritty or loud, and not everyone has to wear red lipstick for nights out. Also, many high school teens now are more receptive to themes such as "masquerade," so it's easier to create a look for a particular theme.

2bU! chose three of the country's top makeup brands to help high school girls get ready for their prom. Check out the latest offerings from Shu Uemura, MAC and Lancôme.

These days, there's no reason to look like someone's spinster aunt. And it'll save you the trouble of blackening your date's eye if he insists on saying that your makeup's ugly.

E-mail biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

shu uemura

Do you love the Sweet Mode look? Go to your prom sporting the prettiest makeup this side of town courtesy of Shu Uemura. 2bU!'s choosing one girl (and a couple of her friends) to be made over by Xeng Zulueta for the prom. All you have to do is e-mail your name, school, contact details, a clear photo, and a short essay on why you deserve the makeover to 2bu.beauty@gmail.com. Be as creative as you can!

SHU UEMURA SWEET MODE

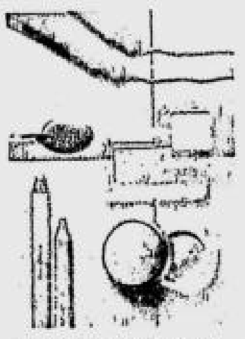
Simply sweet

On Princess, Xeng aimed for simple, fresh-faced look. After prepping her skin with light foundation and powder, she lined Princess' eyes with the blue end of the eye light pencil and intensified the color with the P600 Blue Icing pressed eye shadow. After that, Xeng applied the Sakura glow-on, a fresh pink shade, on the apples of her cheeks. She then finished it off with a swipe of the Daisy sweet lip gloss.

Sweet and sexy

For a natural but striking look, Xeng evened out Danie's skin with Water Perfect foundation. After patting on the Eye Jelly in Gold, Xeng lined Danie's eyes with pressed eye shadows in P200 (Orange Sorbet) and ME100 (Strawberry Mousse). After a sweep of the Apricot glow-on on Danie's cheeks, Xeng applied more Eye Jelly on the center of Danie's lips and topped it with Daisy sweet lip gloss for a fuller pout.

MAKEUP BY XENG ZULUETA
HAIR BY TATIN YANG
MODELS: PRINCESS VIOLAGO, DANIE MENDOZA AND JOY HENDRICKSON



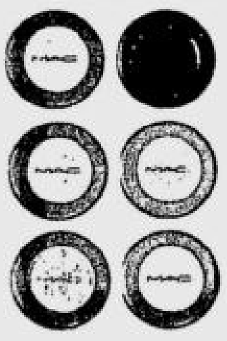
CHECK out Sweet Mode at Shu Uemura counters in Rustan's Glorietta and Shangri-La.

Sugary sweet

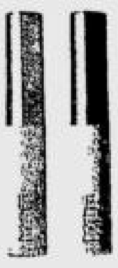
For a more avant-garde look, Xeng used a host of colors from the Sweet Mode collection. After prepping her skin with Water Perfect foundation, Xeng brushed on the Sugar glow-on to make Joy's skin glow. She then patted Joy's eyes with Eye Jelly in order to make color adhere better to the eyelids, and used a combination of four eye shadows (ME100 Strawberry Mousse, P200 Orange Sorbet, P300 Lemon Curd, and P600 Blue Icing), taking care to blend the color carefully for a watercolor-inspired effect. She finished off with a sweep of Apricot blush, eye jelly and sweet lip gloss in Plumeria.

MAC LINGERIE

If you exude natural but glamorous vibes, MAC Lingerie is the collection for you. With makeup colors that look and feel like second skin, Lingerie is great for prom-ready girls who want to be able to use the makeup they wear after a night of glitter and frothy gowns.

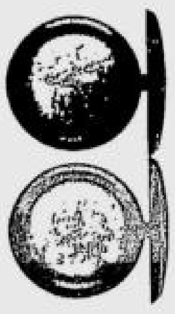


The collection contains new colors of MAC's best-selling products. You won't go wrong with their eye shadows, which last long and in colors that stay put the whole night (no disappearing act when you thank the Academy for your prom queen crown). Try the eye shadows in Slip Pink (pink with pearl) and Taupeless (lilac with diamond cluster).



Also try their Pro Pigments, which are all-around powders for the eyes, lips, cheeks, and décolletage. Goldenaire, a rosy pink shade with gold pearl, is the best all-around color. The pigment also comes in Lovely Lily (lilac with red pearl) and Pink Opal (ivory tinted with pink).

The show-stopper, however, is the Mineralize Skinfinish. This dome-shaped blush is not only pretty to look at, it gives one of the best natural flushes from powder blush. Petticoat, a pale rose shade with gold and amber shimmer, looks great on any skin tone. Naked You, a pale beige shade with brown streaks, is a good highlighter.



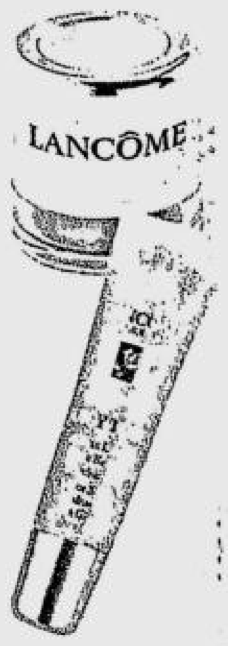
Of course, a MAC collection will never be complete without their trademark lipstick and lip gloss. Check out Pink Maribu, which will go well with knockout black gowns, and Of Courset!, a frosted coral shade.

The Lingerie collection is available at MAC counters in Rustan's Glorietta and Shangri-La.

LANCOME ENCHANTRESS

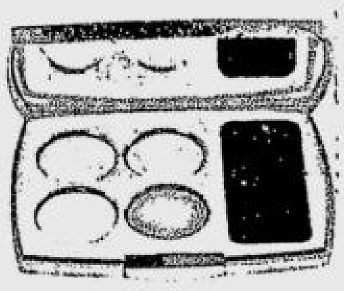
Inspired by Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Lancôme's Enchantress collection is perfect for girls who want a fairy-tale prom.

The look is all about shimmer, ethereal colors, and sweet-looking shine, so play out your princess fantasies, because this makeup is meant to be worn with a tiara.

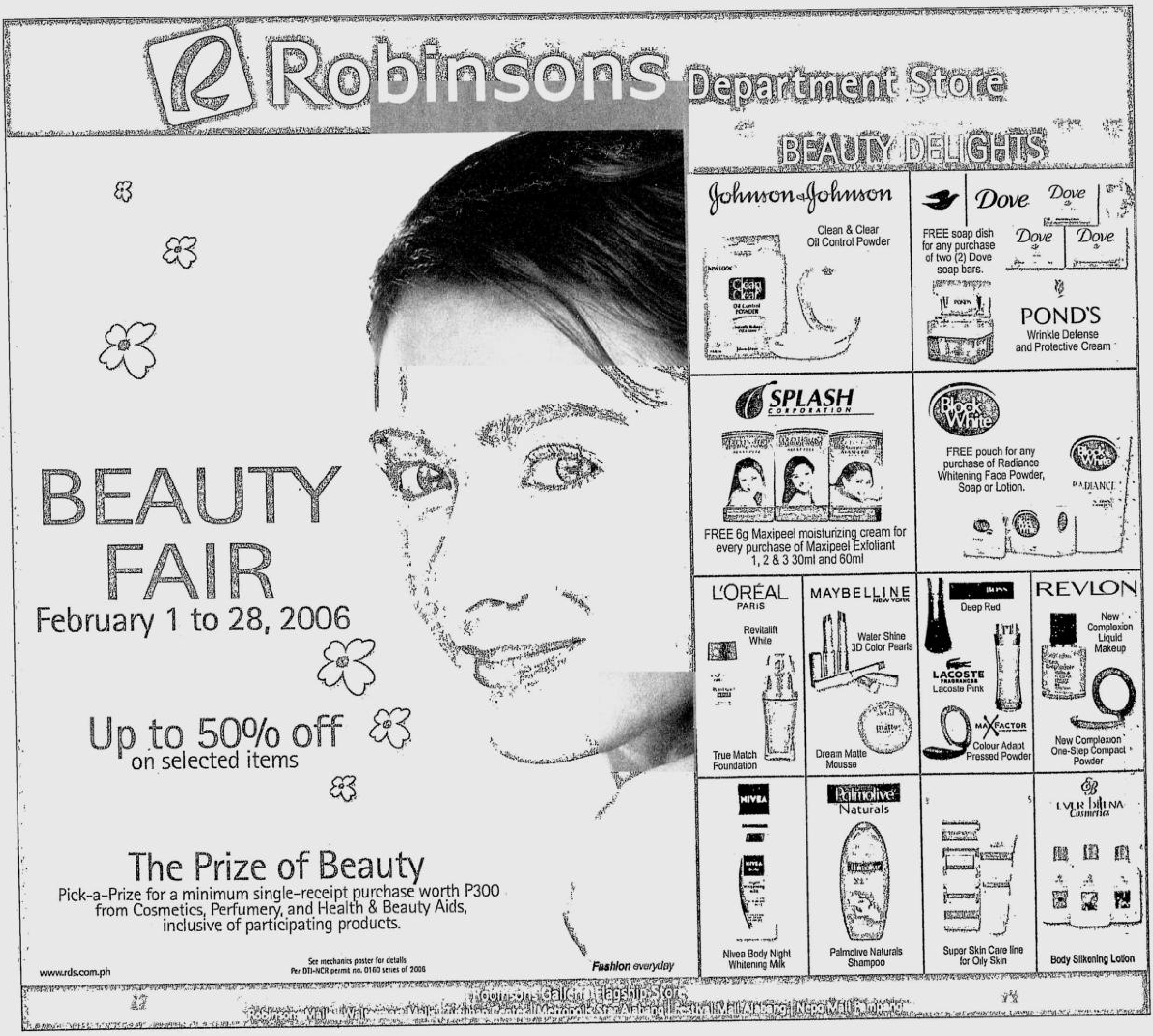


The Petite Boheme shimmer powder, for instance, creates a subtle glow to highlight specific areas on the face and shoulder. Think Galadriel from "Lord of the Rings." It's available in 3 shades: silver, gold and bronze.

Juicy Tubes, Lancôme's best-selling product, are perfect for glossy lips without that overly sticky feeling (the yummy flavors don't hurt, of course.) The limited-edition colors for this season include peach (for the nude look) and a pinky-plum shade.



The Color Focus Palette includes four jewel-toned eye shadows in purples, pinks, and shimmery whites in a floral palette pretty enough to whip out during the prom. These colors are versatile enough to go smoky or clean, and last long, too! Finish off the look with Crayon Khol Waterproof liner, a long-lasting liner available in four metallic colors: silver, gold, bronze and blue.



Robinsons Department Store

BEAUTY DELIGHTS

BEAUTY FAIR
February 1 to 28, 2006

Up to 50% off
on selected items

The Prize of Beauty
Pick-a-Prize for a minimum single-receipt purchase worth P300 from Cosmetics, Perfumery, and Health & Beauty Aids, inclusive of participating products.

www.rds.com.ph

See mechanics poster for details
Per DTI-NCR permit no. 0160 series of 2006

Fashion everyday

Johnson & Johnson
Clean & Clear Oil Control Powder

Dove
FREE soap dish for any purchase of two (2) Dove soap bars.

POND'S
Wrinkle Defense and Protective Cream

SPLASH CORPORATION
FREE 6g Maxipeel moisturizing cream for every purchase of Maxipeel Exfoliant 1, 2 & 3 30ml and 60ml

Block & White
FREE pouch for any purchase of Radiance Whitening Face Powder, Soap or Lotion.

L'ORÉAL PARIS
Revitalift White
True Match Foundation

MAYBELLINE NEW YORK
Water Shine 3D Color Pearls
Dream Matte Mousse

BOSS
Deep Red
LACOSTE FRAGRANCES
Lacoste Pink
MAX FACTOR
Colour Adapt Pressed Powder

REVLON
New Complexion Liquid Makeup
New Complexion One-Step Compact Powder

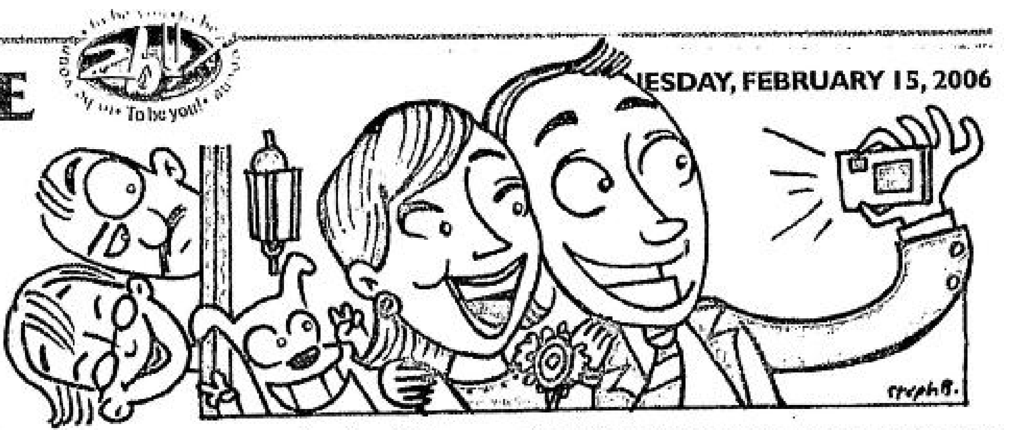
NIVEA
Nivea Body Night Whitening Milk

Palmolive Naturals
Palmolive Naturals Shampoo

Super Skin Care line for Oily Skin

EB Ever Bilena Cosmetics
Body Silkening Lotion

Robinsons Galleria Flagship Store
Robinsons [illegible] | Metropolis Star Alabang | Festival Mall Alabang | Nepo Mall Pampanga



Cool, boy

By Paolo Lorenzana
2bU! Contributor

PROM IS LIKE THE HOLY COMMUNION OF dating—a rite of passage that, with all its expectations and reservations, is an experience in itself.

But before you slip into your suit and strap that Velcro corsage onto your date's wrist, here are some things to consider so you can avoid cringing at the memory of one of the most significant nights of your high school life.

> Your prom isn't the last night you'll ever be in the presence of the opposite sex, so take it easy, tiger

Dos

Your interest in your date's parents should correlate with your interest in taking her out of their house. Arriving early enough to pick your date up and assuring them of who you are and your night's itinerary is like collateral for bringing their daughter back.

Anticipate and deliver. From matching the color of her dress to her corsage, taking care of the post-prom snack tab to the music that plays in your car and opening its doors for her—always be one step ahead as your date's attendant and bodyguard.

If you had to pick one night in your high school life to actually look like money, make it prom night. Comb that hair, shave that budding mustache, and invest in a suit that isn't shiny, too big or a mint-green hand-me-down from an older brother.

All right, you can never be Diego Luna in "Dirty Dancing 2," but at least try to put some effort in your two-step. After making it clear that you "don't dance," moving your feet—and not just shaking your head—will still be appreciated by your date.

If your prom turns out to have the fun factor of a school symposium, bringing your date out for some coffee or midnight grub rather than a raucous after-party is always favorable. Showing her a great time with good conversation is your golden ticket to a succeeding date.

Don'ts

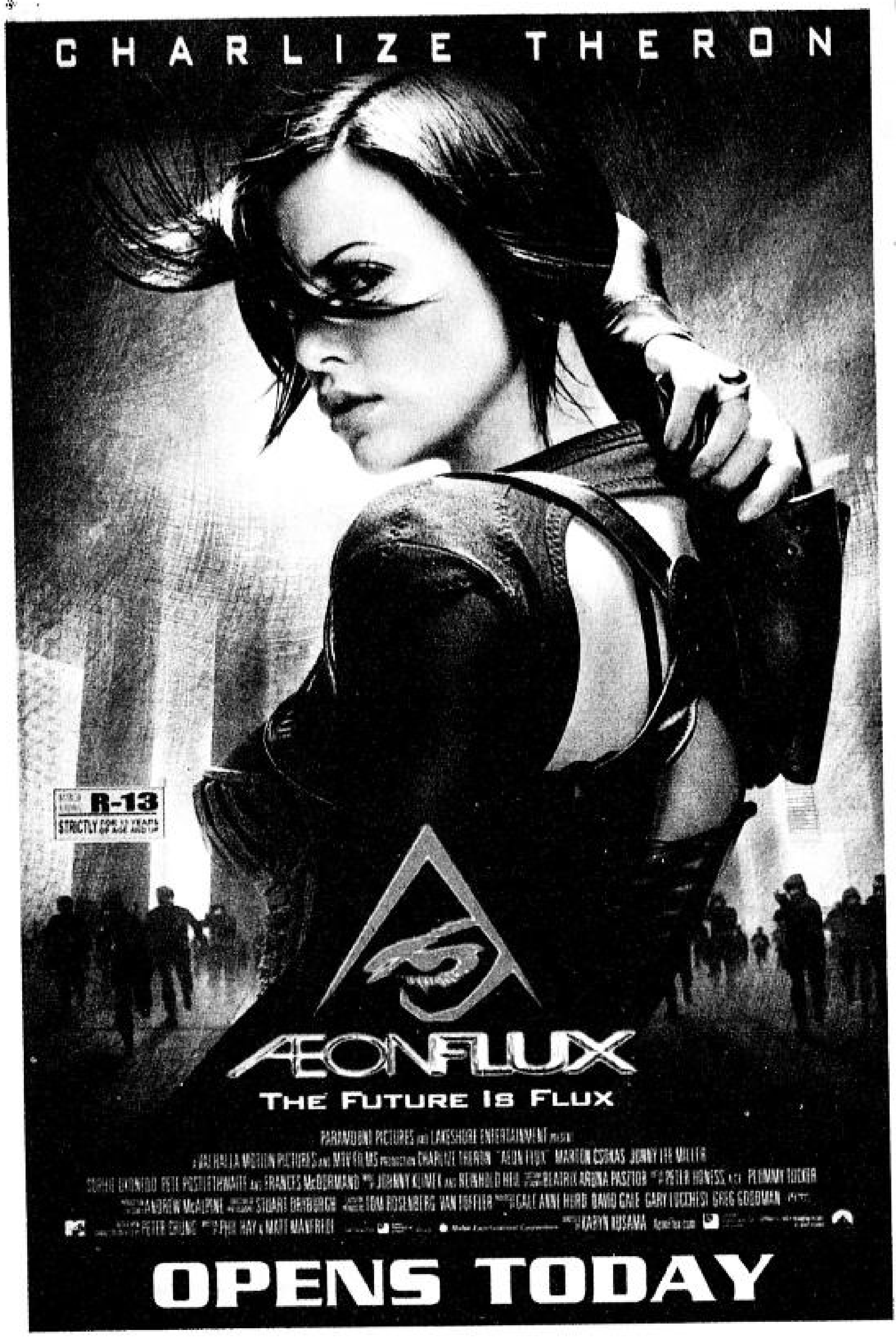
Girls devote almost an entire day to what you see when they finally emerge from their rooms. And that doesn't even include the dress. A compliment or two won't make you a cheesy cliché, but ignoring your date's appearance will make you an ungrateful pig.

Considering you'll actually want to remember this night and bring your date home safely, lay off the booze. It's one party that can afford to be "lame" without the liquor. There'll be enough beer kegs in college, anyway.

Your prom isn't the last night you'll ever be in the presence of the opposite sex, so take it easy, tiger. Groping your date on the dance floor and telling her you've got motel reservations won't crown you prom king. It'll only label you a perv.

Do away with flashcard conversation or telling your date how many crunches you do at the gym. You can impress her by listening and being genuinely interested in what she has to say, not by how many topics you can talk about or by treating her like a counselor.

You will never be Heath, Freddy, or that dude with the hot date. Acting like someone you're not will only put snags in your night and make your date uncomfortable. Your prom happens only once, so whether you're going with a girlfriend or a pity partner tagged by your mother, milk this night for what it's worth.



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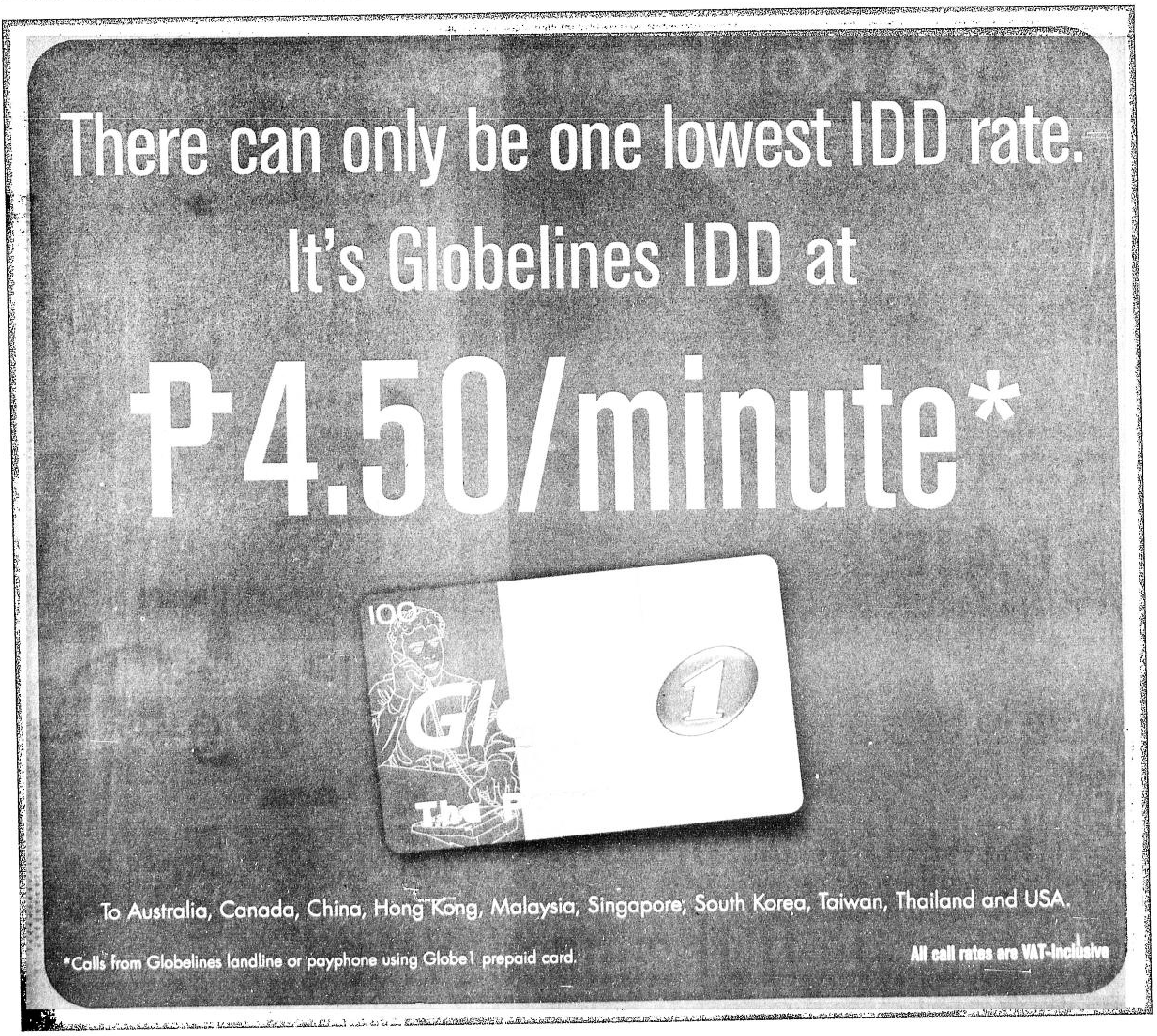
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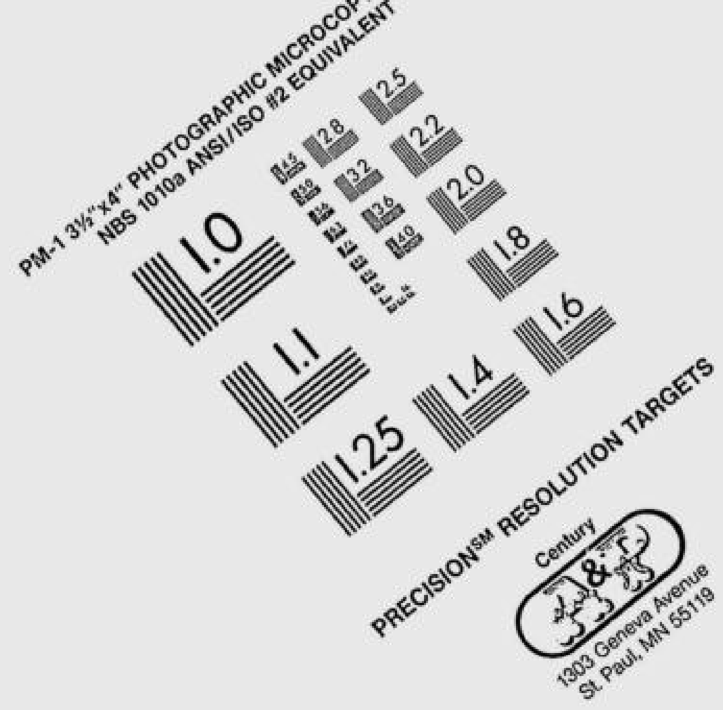
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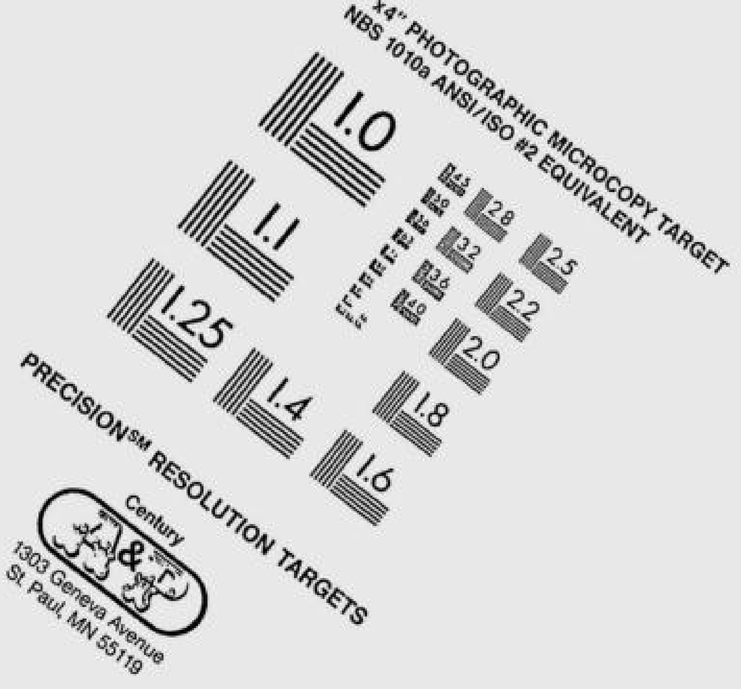
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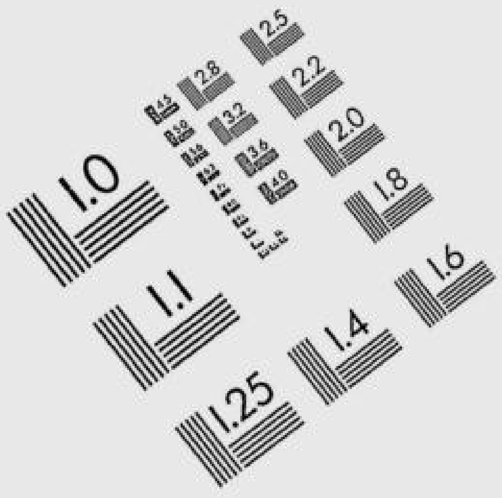
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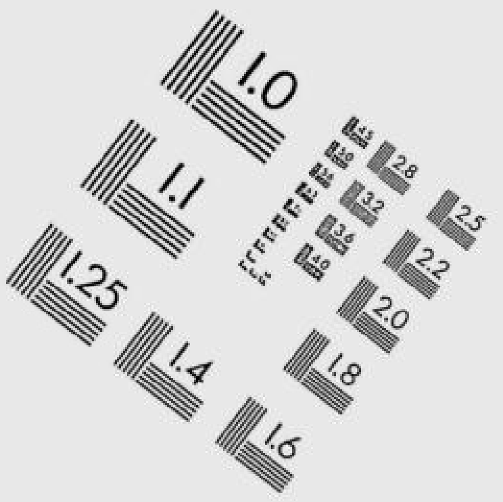
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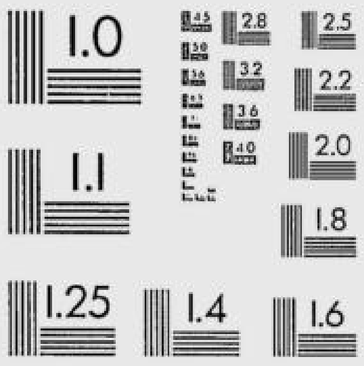
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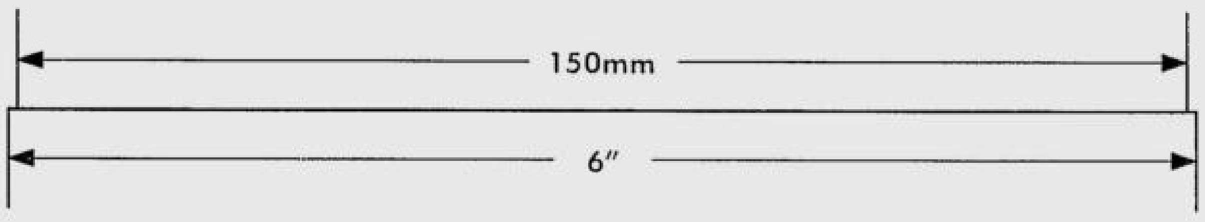

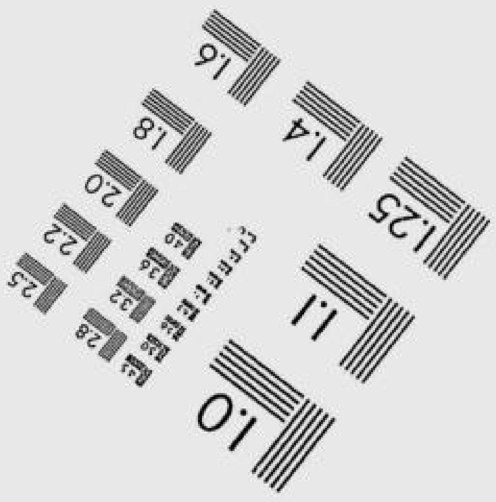
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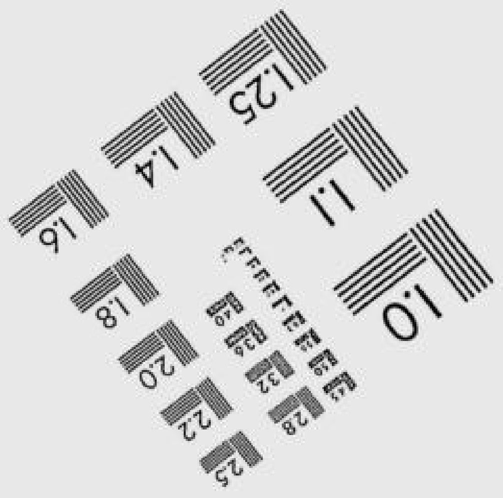
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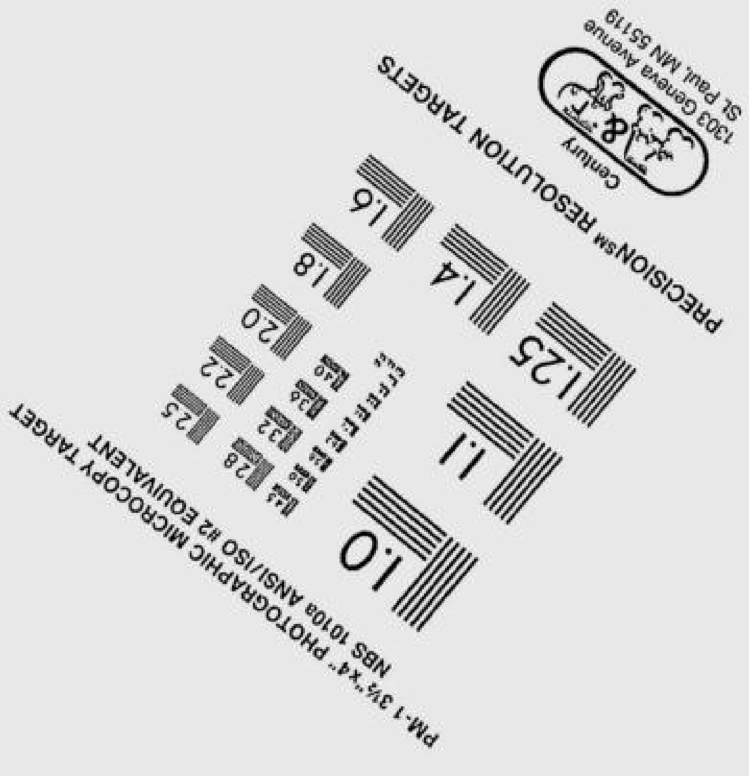
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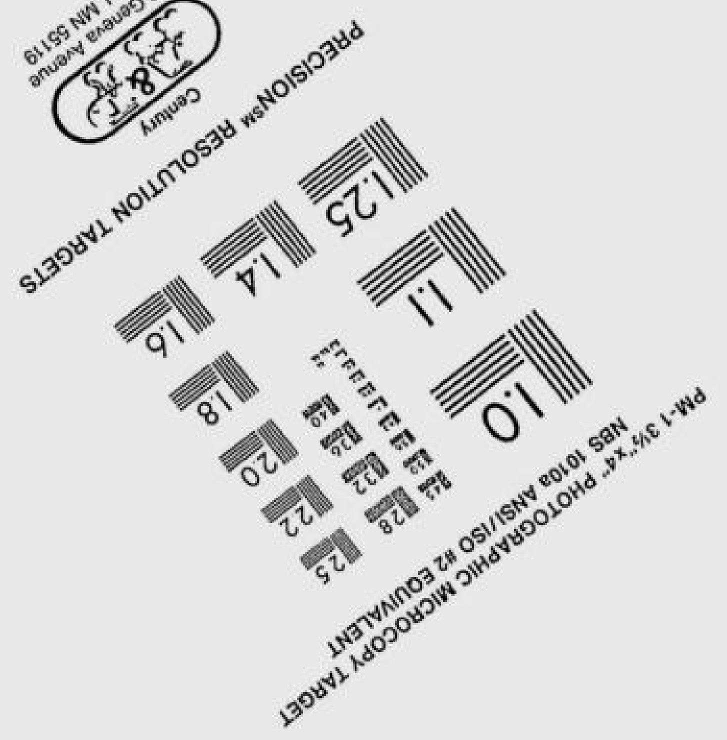
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